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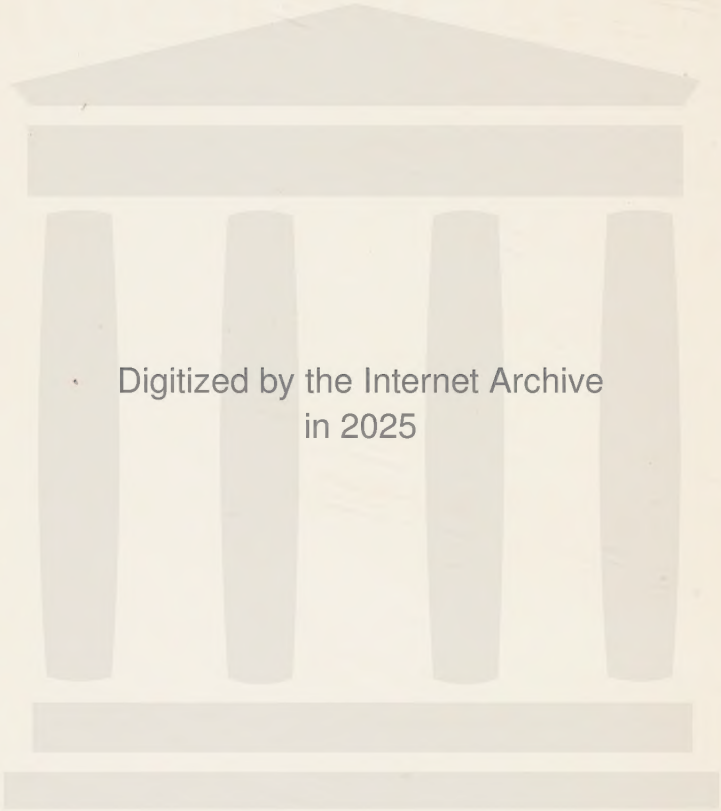
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International Sunday-School Lessons for 1896

STANDARD

ECLECTIC COMMENTARY

COMPRISING

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED NOTES

EXPLANATORY, ILLUSTRATIVE, PRACTICAL

PREPARED BY

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GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES BY

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President of College of the Bible, Lexington, Ky.

Embellished with Maps, Diagrams, Chronological Charts, Tables, Etc., Etc.

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PREFATORY.

EVERY family in a Christian land should have some hand-book which outlines and suggests thought and study in the Bible for the year. As yet, we have nothing better in this field than the course laid out in the International Sunday-school Lesson series. Prepared primarily for the Sunday-school, this volume has yet in some degree been shaped for all who would do conscientious and continuous study of the Bible; and the lessons are practical, rather than critical.

The book of Luke, in which the life of Christ is studied this year, naturally precedes the same writer's book of Acts, to which the lessons next year naturally proceed. We may well be glad to greet, and reluctant to drop, the study of *his* life. No other study blesses mind and heart so much.

The writer must acknowledge his indebtedness to Miss MYRTA G. PARSONS, a graduate of Hiram College, whose consecrated and cultured pen has largely provided the illustrative matter in "Lessons from the Lesson." To one who is full-burdened with other work, her help has been invaluable.

The work of the Sunday-school, in some form, must be as permanent as the church. As the church rises more fully to its

1769

mission, the school must take on greater importance. Such study lies in the way of life's truest activities, indeed in a large part of them; and it leads to fields of perpetual joy.

> Count not the years that pass away
> By vanished joys, and life's decay;
> Count rather by what life has won,
> Truths that are gained, and good deeds done.

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THE INTERWOVEN TEXT.

In our series of Standard Sunday-school Lesson Supplies, the "Interwoven Text" is used. It is a combination of the authorized and revised versions in such a form as to impress upon the reader's attention the renderings which coincide, as well as those peculiar to each version.

The words which *are the same* in both versions are set in the *large type;* where different readings occur the *authorized* version is given in the *top* line of *small* type, and the *revised* version in the *bottom* line of *small* type.

The two versions are thus clearly presented at a glance, with their differences indicated unmistakably by the mere form in which they are printed, an arrangement much superior to the usual parallel columns. This is a unique and valuable feature which no other series of Sunday-school lesson helps contains.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

WEIGHTS.

	Avoirdupois. lbs.	oz.	drs.		Troy. lbs.	oz.	dwt.	grs.
A gerah	.	..	0·439	=	...	.	..	12
10 gerahs = 1 bekah	...	..	4·39	=	...	..	5	0
2 bekahs = 1 shekel	..	..	8·78	=	...	..	10	0
60 shekels = 1 maneh	1	0	11·628	=	2	6	0	0
50 manehs = 1 talent	102	13	11·428	=	125	0	0	0

MEASURES.

LONG MEASURE.

	ft.	in.
A digit, or finger (Jer. lii. 21	...	0·912
4 digits = 1 palm (Exod. xxv. 25)	...	3·648
3 palms = 1 span (Exod. xxviii. 16)	...	10 944
2 spans = 1 cubit (Gen. vi. 15)	1	9·888
4 cubits = 1 fathom (Acts xxvii. 28)	7	3·552
1·5 fathoms = 1 reed (Ezek. xl. 3, 5)	10	11·328
1·33 reeds = 1 line (Ezek. xl. 3	11	11·04

LAND MEASURE.

	Eng. miles.	paces.	ft.
A cubit	..	...	1·824
400 cubits = 1 furlong (Luke xxiv. 1.	..	146	4·6
5 furlongs = 1 sabbath day's journey (John xi. 18; Acts i. 12)	..	727	3·0
10 furlongs = 1 mile (Matt. v. 41)	1	399	1·0
24 miles = 1 day's journey	33	76	4·0

LIQUID MEASURE.

	gals.	pts.
A caph	..	0·625
1·3 caph = 1 log (Lev. xiv. 10)	..	0·833
4 logs = 1 cab	..	3·333
3 cabs = 1 hin (Exod. xxx. 24)	1	2
2 hins = 1 seah	2	4
3 seahs = 1 bath, or ephah (I. Kings vii. 26; John ii. 6)	7	4·5
10 ephahs = 1 kor, or homer (Isa. v. 10; Ezek. xlv. 14)	75	5·25

DRY MEASURE.

	pecks.	gals.	pts.
A gachal	.	.	0·1416
20 gachals = 1 cab (II. Kings vi. 25; Rev. vi. 6)	..	..	2·8333
1·8 cab = 1 omer (Exod. xvi. 36)	..	..	5·1
3·3 omers = 1 seah (Matt. xiii. 33)	1	0	1
3 seahs = 1 ephah (Ezek. xlv. 11)	3	0	3
5 ephahs = 1 letech (Hos. iii. 2)	16	0	0
2 letechs = 1 kor, or homer (Num. xi. 32; Hos. iii. 2)	32	0	0

N. B.—The above table will explain many texts in the Bible, especially those which are placed within brackets. Take, for instance, Isa. v. 10: "Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah." This curse upon the covetous man was that 10 acres of vines should produce only 7 gallons of wine, *i. e.*, one acre should yield less than 3 quarts; and that 32 pecks of seed should only bring a crop of three pecks, or, in other words, that the harvest should produce but one-tenth the quantity of the seed sown.

JEWISH MONEY,

With its value in English and American money; the American dollar being taken as equal to 4s. 2d.

	English. £.	s.	d.		American. dols.	cents.
A gerah (Exod. xxx. 13) =	0	0	1·36	=	0	2·73
10 gerahs = 1 bekah (Exod. xxxviii. 26) =	0	1	1·68	=	0	27.37
2 bekahs = 1 shekel (Exod. xxx. 13; Isa. vii. 23) =	0	2	3·37	=	0	54·74
50 shekels = 1 maneh =	5	14	0·75	=	27	37·50
60 manehs = 1 kikkar (talent) =	342	3	9	=	1,642	50
A gold shekel =	1	16	6	=	8	76
A kikkar of gold =	5,475	0	0	=	26,280	0

N. B.—A *shekel* would probably purchase nearly ten times as much as the same nominal amount will now. Remember that one *Roman* penny (8½*d.*) was a good day's wages for a laborer.

The Hebrew *maneh*, according to I. Kings x. 17, compared with II. Chron. ix. 16, contained 100 shekels: though according to one interpretation of Ezek. xlv. 12, it contained 60, but more probably 50. The passage reads thus: "Twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels shall be your maneh. This is variously interpreted, (1) 20 + 25 + 15 = 60. (2) 20, 25, 15 are different coins in gold, silver, and copper, bearing the same name. It is well to remark the meaning of these names: Shekel = simply *weight*. Bekah = *split*, *i. e.*, the shekel divided into two. Gerah = a *grain*, as in our weights, a grain and a *barley-corn*, the original standard weight. Maneh = *appointed*, equivalent to *sterling*, a specific sum. Kikkar = a *round* mass of metal, *i. e.*, a weight or coin. Hebrew names of weights and coins are not found in the New Testament: *mna* in Luke xix. 13 is Greek, though possibly identical with the Hebrew maneh.

Roman.	*English.* d.		*American.* cents.
A "farthing," *quadrans* (Matt. v. 26) = nearly	0·125	=	0·25
A "farthing," *as* = 4 *quadrantes* (Matt. x. 29) = nearly	0·5	=	1
A "penny," *denarius* = 16 *ases* (Matt. xxii. 19) nearly	8·50	=	17

The Roman sestertius = 2¼ ases, is not named in the Bible.

N. B.—Here we learn that—

NAAMAN'S offering to Elisha of 6,000 pieces (shekels) of gold amounted to more than £10,000 = 48,000 *dollars*.

The DEBTOR (Matt. xviii. 24) who had been forgiven 10,000 talents, *i. e.*, £3,000,000 = 14,400,000 *dollars*, refused to forgive his fellow-servant 100 pence, *i. c.*, £3 10*s.* 8*d.* = 17 *dollars*.

JUDAS sold our Lord for 30 pieces of silver, *i. c.*, £3 10*s.* 8*d.* = 16 *dollars*, 96 *cents*, the legal value of a slave, if he were killed by a beast.

JOSEPH was sold by his brethren for 20 pieces, *i. e.*, £2 7*s.* = 11 *dollars*, 28 *cents*.

TIME.

The *natural* day was from sunrise to sunset.
The *natural* night was from sunset to sunrise.
The *civil* day was from sunset one evening to sunset the next; for, the "evening and the morning were the first day."

NIGHT (*Ancient*).	DAY (*Ancient*).
First watch (Lam. ii. 19) till midnight.	Morning till about 10 a. m.
Middle watch (Judg. vii. 19) till 3 a. m.	Heat of day till about 2 p. m.
Morning watch (Exod. xiv. 24) till 6 a. m.	Cool of day till about 6. p. m.
NIGHT (*New Testament*).	DAY (*New Testament*).
First watch, *evening* = 6 to 9 p. m.	Third hour = 6 to 9 a. m.
Second watch, *midnight* = 9 to 12 p. m.	Sixth hour = 9 to 12 midday.
Third watch, *cock-crow* = 12 to 3 a. m.	Ninth hour = 12 to 3 p. m.
Fourth watch, *morning* = 3 to 6 a. m.	Twelfth hour = 3 to 6 p. m.

THE JEWISH YEAR

Month of Sacred Year.	Month of Civil Year	Name.	Number of Days.	English Months.	Products.	Jewish Festivals.
I	VII	Abib, or Nisan (Exod. xii. 2; xiii. 4)	30	March, April.	Barley ripe. Fig in blos som.	Passover. Unleavened Bread
II	VIII.	Iyar, or Zif.	29	April, May.	Barley harvest.	
III	IX.	Sivan.	30	May, June.	Wheat harvest.	Pentecost.
IV.	X.	Thammuz.	29	June, July.	Early vintage.	
V	XI.	Ab (Ezra vii. 9).	30	July, August.	Ripe figs.	
VI.	XII.	Elul (Neh. vi. 15).	29	August, Sept.	General vintage.	
VII.	I.	Tisri (I. Kings viii. 2).	30	Sept., Oct.	Ploughing and Sowing.	Feast of Trumpets. Atonement. Feast of Tabernacles.
VIII.	II.	Bul (I. Kings vi. 38).	29	Oct., Nov.	Latter grapes	
IX	III.	Chisleu (Zech. v. 1).	30	Nov., Dec.	Snow.	Dedication.
X.	IV.	Tebeth (Esth ii. 16).	29	Dec , Jan.	Grass after rain.	
XI.	V.	Shebat (Zech. i. 7).	30	Jan., Feb.	Winter fig.	
XII	VI.	Adar (Ezra vi. 15).	29	Feb , March.	Almond blossom.	Purim.
XIII		Ve-Adar, *Intercalary*.				

N. B.—The SACRED YEAR was reckoned from the moon after the vernal equinox.
The CIVIL YEAR began in September (the less productive period of the year).
The prophets speak of the *sacred* year; those engaged in secular pursuits, of the *civil* year. The year was divided into 12 *lunar* months, with a thirteenth, or *intercalary* month, every third year.

NOTES ON THE HARMONY.

What is a "Harmony," and what is its use? If we arrange the four "Gospels" side by side, with the paragraphs in the order in which they were written, they can not possibly be made to agree in the chronological succession of events. Does it therefore follow that either of them is untrue or incorrect? No! Why not? Because none of the evangelists has claimed to relate every event in its exact chronological order. The task of the Harmonist is to show that the narratives can be so arranged, without doing violence to their principles of construction, as to make a continuous history involving no contradictions, and only such variations and supplementary additions, as were to be expected in independent witnesses, and even to be *desired*, as proving their independence. In the narrow limits allowed this article we can only sketch results of our study. **First,** It is impossible that all the evangelists wrote in strict chronological order. **Second,** *John* is strictly chronological. We have made but two transpositions, and these merely for convenience. The first is xviii. 24, he locating the verse at *giving* of the order, we at the fulfilling; the second is xviii. 17, 18, bringing together Peter's three denials. But while his succession is chronological, there are immense gaps, which are filled by the other evangelists, and *vice versa*. John is the historian of the Judæan ministry in the main, the others give the Galilean and Peræan ministry. **Third,** *Mark*, also, is strictly chronological (with a few exceptions, and these easily explainable), due probably to the good memory of Peter. **Fourth,** *Matthew* and *Luke* both need large transpositions in order to a harmonious history, unless we imagine the repetition of the same events with the same minute surroundings, and the same teaching in the same words at different epochs of the ministry, a hypothesis which we deem untenable, in regard to the events at least. Because of these considerations we have made Mark and John the basis of our chronological arrangement, and have transposed events in the others only where they did not give exact chronological data, and only to the extent necessary for time harmony. Some of the *teachings* of Jesus in Luke, which seemed to be identical with the sermon on the mount, and other parts of Matthew, we have transposed to a parallel place. Portions of these, however, *may* have been repeated. Their arrangement in the harmony will be valuable for topical reference. There are very few transpositions of Mark. The notice of John the Baptist's imprisonment, vi. 17-20, which he gives as a reminiscence, we have transposed to the date of its occurrence. In the same way he speaks of the beheading of the Baptist (vi. 21-29) after the mention of Herod's perplexed wondering (vi. 14-16) whether he had come to life again. We have transposed these. Again, Mark mentions the feast at Bethany (xiv. 3-9) in its logical connection with the treachery of Judas, but John so distinctly locates it six days before the Passover that we transpose it to that point. A slight transposition of xiv. 55-65 completes the list in Mark. With these exceptions we look upon his history as accurately chronological.

In Matthew and Luke we have been compelled to make many transpositions, good reasons for all of which could be given. This being impracticable here, we can only indicate one or two points. If we make Matthew xix. 1, Mark x. 1, coincident with Luke ix. 51; John vii. 2, difficulties arise incapable of solution. And yet all of these seem to indicate the close of the Galilean ministry. The solution is found in the Harmony. Luke and John are coincident, and mark a journey of which Matt. and Mark say nothing. During this journey the "Seventy" were sent out. Their mission has always been a difficult question. It is evident that the ministry in Galilee was now complete. Where, then, at this late period of his general ministry, did he send them "two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was about to come"? It could not have been in Galilee, for he never returned there to teach. It could not have been in Samaria, for it was now Autumn, and he is soon in Jerusalem at the feast of Tabernacles, and the "Seventy" evidently return to him before he goes to the towns which they have prepared for him. We think the solution will be found in the Harmony. On the way to Jerusalem, he sent them by the direct route across to Jericho and beyond Jordan, where, with prescience of what would happen at the feast of Tabernacles, he expected to retire from Jewish fury. They were to report to him at Jerusalem. They did so, Luke x. 17-24. When the Jews sought to arrest him, John x. 39-42, he went over to the field thus prepared for him. Luke's xiii.-xvi. occurred there, *possibly* also xi.; xii. Jesus returned to raise Lazarus, and was soon driven away to Ephraim. The last Passover is now approaching, at which he is to die. He has decided to allow himself to be proclaimed as the Messiah but, for the full effect of this, it must be under imposing auspices. He resolves to go north from Ephraim, and join the great caravan from Galilee, which, avoiding Samaria, crossed the Jordan not far from Bethshean, and went down on the east side to the Jericho ford. This northward trip at once explains why the much discussed Luke xvii. 11 mentions Samaria before Galilee, when he is on his way to Jerusalem. It is this, the *final* departure from Galilee, to which Matt. xix. 1 and Mark x. 1 refer. After this the testimonies of the evangelists follow on in unbroken lines side by side to No. 263, with the single exception that Matthew and Mark mention the feast at Bethany in its logical connection with Judas' treachery; while John mentions it at its true chronological date. In regard to our somewhat independent arrangement of the last scenes, the trials, crucifixion and resurrection, the reasons will be found fully given in the notes on the corresponding lessons of 1889, and those of this commentary. They have seemed to the writer a satisfactory solution of the difficulty which many have felt in harmonizing the varying statements of the four evangelists.

The passages opposite the full-faced type will be found to present a complete itinerary of the travels of Jesus as far as given in the N. T. The italics present a complete list of his miracles, and the ordinary type, of his teachings. The writer hopes and prays that the use of the Harmony may prove as useful to his readers as its preparation has been to himself.

A. N. GILBERT.

A CONDENSED HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

COMPILED AND REVISED BY A. N. GILBERT.

ABBREVIATIONS: Sp., Spring; Su., Summer; Au., Autumn; W., Winter; M., March; A., April; Ma., May.

Prob. Order.	DATE.	EVENT OR TEXT.	MATTHEW.	MARK	LUKE.	JOHN.
1	.....	Christ before incarnation	.....	.....	.....	i. 1-6
2	.....	Luke's prologue	.....	.....	i. 1-4	.....
3	B. C. 6	*Annunciation to Zacharias*	.....	.....	i. 5-25	.....
4	"	*Annunciation to Mary*	.....	.....	i. 26-38	.....
5	B. C. 5	Mary visits Elizabeth	.....	.....	i. 39-56	.....
6	"	*Birth and circumcision of John*	.....	.....	i. 57-80	.....
7	"	Genealogies of Jesus	i. 1-17	.....	iii. 23-38	.....
8	B. C. 5	*Vision of Joseph*	i. 18-24	.....	.....	.....
9	"	*Birth of Jesus*	i. 25	.....	ii. 1-7	.....
10	"	*The shepherd's vision*	.....	.....	ii. 8-20	.....
11	"	Circumcision of Jesus	.....	.....	ii 21	.....
12	"	**Presentation in Temple**	.....	.....	ii. 22-24	.....
13	"	Simeon and Anna	.....	.....	ii. 25-38	.....
14	"	*The Wise Men*	ii. 1-12	.....	.....	.....
15	"	**Flight into Egypt**	ii. 13-15	.....	.....	.....
16	"	Massacre at Bethlehem	ii. 16-18	.....	.....	.....
17	B. C. 4	**Return from Egypt**	ii. 19-23	.....	ii. 39	.....
18	A. D. 8	**Boyhood of Jesus**	.....	.....	ii. 40-52	.....
19	Sp. 26	John the Baptist	iii. 1-12	i. 1-8	iii. 1-18	.....
20	Su. 25	**Baptism of Jesus**	iii. 13-17	i. 9-11	iii. 21, 22	.....
21	Au. 26	**Temptation of Jesus**	iv. 1-11	i. 12, 13	iv. 1-13	.....
22	"	John's first testimony	.....	.....	.....	i. 7-28
23	"	**Jesus returns to Jordan**	.....	.....	.....	i. 29
24	"	John's second testimony	.....	.....	.....	i. 30-34
25	"	John's third testimony	.....	.....	.....	i. 35, 36
26	"	First five disciples	.....	.....	.....	i. 37-51
27	Sp. 27	**Jesus goes to Cana**	.....	.....	.....	ii. 1, 2
28	"	*Water made wine*	.....	.....	.....	ii. 3-11
29	"	**A visit to Capernaum**	.....	.....	.....	ii. 12
30	"	**First Passover and Temple Cleansing**	.....	.....	.....	ii. 13-25
31	"	Christ and Nicodemus	.....	.....	.....	iii. 1-21
32	"	**Jesus goes into Judea**	.....	.....	.....	iii. 22
33	Su. 27	John's fourth testimony	.....	.....	.....	iii. 23-36
34	Au. 27	John the Baptist imprisoned	xiv. 3-5	vi. 17-20	iii. 19, 20	.....
35	W. 27	**Jesus starts for Galilee**	iv. 12	.....	.....	iv. 1-3
36	"	The Samaritan woman	.....	.....	.....	iv. 4-42
37	"	**Arrival in Galilee**	.....	i. 14, 15	iv. 14, 15	iv. 43-45
38	"	**Second visit to Cana**	.....	.....	.....	iv. 46
39	"	*Nobleman's son healed*	.....	.....	.....	iv. 47-54
40	"	**Visit and rejection at Nazareth**	.....	.....	iv. 16-30	.....
41	"	**Removal to Capernaum**	iv. 13-17	.....	iv. 31	.....
42	"	*First miraculous draught*	.....	.....	v. 1-11	.....
43	"	First four apostles	iv. 18-22	i. 16-20	v. 10-11	.....
44	"	*Demoniac at Capernaum*	.....	i. 21-28	iv. 33-37	.....
45	"	*Peter's mother-in-law*	viii. 14-17	i. 29-34	iv. 38-41	.....
46	Sp. 28	**First general tour of Galilee**	iv. 23-25	i. 35-39	iv. 42-44	.....
47	"	*A leper healed*	viii. 2-4	i. 40-45	v. 12-16	.....
48	"	**Crosses lake to Capernaum**	ix. 1	ii. 1	.....	.....
49	"	*Paralytic in Capernaum*	ix. 2-8	ii. 2-12	v. 17-26	.....
50	"	Matthew called	ix. 9	ii. 13, 14	v. 27, 28	.....
51	"	Matthew makes a feast	ix. 10-17	ii. 15-22	v. 29-39	.....
52	"	**Attends second Passover**	.....	.....	.....	v. 1
53	"	*Impotent man healed*	.....	.....	.....	v. 2-18
54	"	Jesus vindicates himself	.....	.....	.....	v. 19-47
55	"	**Return to the lake**	.....	.....	.....	vi. 1
56	"	Plucking of the grain	xii. 1-8	ii. 23-28	vi. 1-5	.....
57	"	*Withered hand healed*	xii. 9-14	iii. 1-6	vi. 6-11	.....
58	"	**Reaches lake shore**	xii. 15	iii. 7, 8	.....	.....
59	"	*Multitudes healed*	xii. 15-21	iii. 9-12	.....	.....
60	"	The Twelve ordained	.....	iii. 13-19	vi. 12-16	.....
61	"	*Multitudes again healed*	.....	.....	vi. 17-19	.....
62	"	**Sermon on Mount begun**	v. 1-12	.....	vi. 20-23	.....
63	"	Messiah's law revised	v. 13-37	.....	xii. 58, 59	.....
64	"	Love for enemies	v. 38-48	.....	vi. 27-36	.....
65	"	Secrecy of alms and prayer	vi. 1-8	.....	.....	.....
66	"	The model prayer	vi. 9-15	.....	xi. 1-4	.....
67	"	How to fast	vi. 16-18	.....	.....	.....
68	"	Where to lay up treasure	vi. 19-21	.....	xii. 33, 34	.....
69	"	Light and darkness	vi. 22, 23	.....	xi. 33-36	.....
70	"	Trust in Providence	vi. 24-34	.....	xii. 22-32	.....
71	"	Against hasty judgment	vii. 1-5	.....	vi. 37-42	.....
72	"	Earnestness in prayer	vii. 6-11	.....	xi. 5-13	.....
73	"	Against hypocrites	vii. 15-20	.....	vi. 43-45	.....
74	"	Hearing and doing	vii. 21-27	.....	vi. 46-49	.....
75	"	Sermon on Mount ended	vii. 28, 29	.....	.....	.....
76	"	**Return to Capernaum**	viii. 1	.....	vii. 1	.....
77	"	*Centurion's servant healed*	viii. 5-13	.....	vii. 2-10	.....
78	"	**Goes to Nain**	.....	.....	vii. 11	.....

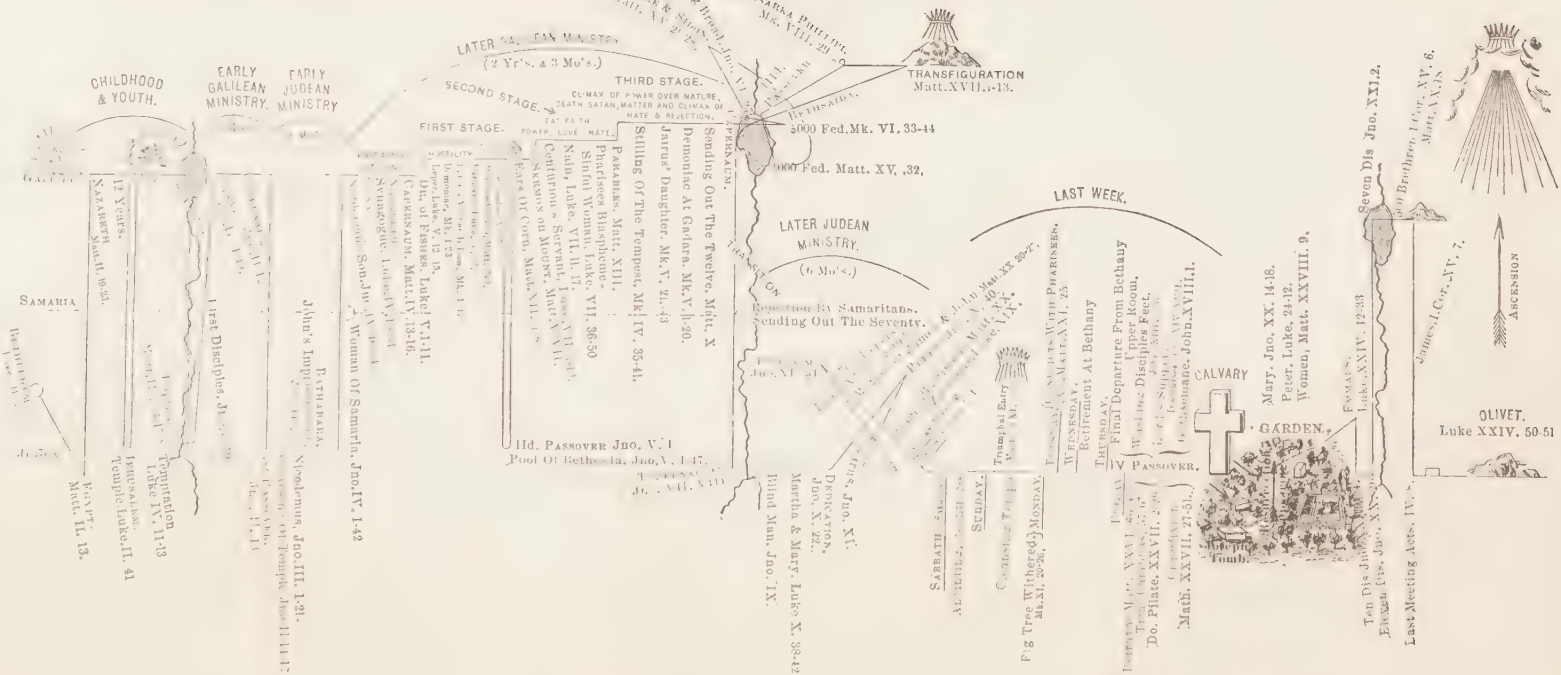
Prob. Order	DATE.	EVENT OR TEACHING.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
79	Sp. 28	*Widow's son raised*			vii. 12-17	
80	"	**Second tour of Galilee**	xi. 1			
81	"	**Jesus' testimony to John**	xi. 2-19		vii. 18-35	
82	"	Denunciation of Capernaum, etc.	xi. 20-24			
83	"	Come unto me	xi. 25-30			
84	"	Sinful woman's anointing			vii. 36-50	
85	Su. 28	**Second tour of Galilee continued**			viii. 1-3	
86	Au. 28	*Blind and dumb demoniac*	xii. 22, 23		xi. 14	
87	"	**Is Satan against himself?**	xii. 24-37	iii. 20-30	xi. 15-23	
88	"	Jesus refuses a sign	xii. 38-42		xi. 29-32	
89	"	Parable, Unclean Spirit	xii. 43-45		xi. 24-28	
90	"	**Jesus' true relations**	xii. 46-50	iii. 31-35	viii. 19-21	
91	"	Denunciation at feast			xi. 37-54	
92	"	Parable, Rich Fool			xii. 13-21	
93	"	Providences not judgment			xiii. 1-5	
94	"	Parable, Fig Tree			xiii. 6-9	
95	"	Parable, The Sower	xiii. 1-9	iv. 1-9	viii. 4-8	
96	"	Why he spoke in parables	xiii. 10-17	iv. 10-12	viii. 9, 10	
97	"	Explanation of Sower	xiii. 18-23	iv. 13-20	viii. 11-15	
98	"	Parable, Tare Tares	xiii. 24-30			
99	"	Parable, Mustard Seed	xiii. 31, 32	iv. 30-34		
100	"	Parable, Hid Leaven	xiii. 33			
101	"	Explanation of Tares	xiii. 34-43			
102	"	Parables: Treasure, Pearl, Net	xiii. 44-50			
103	"	Parable, Hid Lamp		iv. 21-25	viii. 16-18	
104	"	Parable, Seed Growing Secretly		iv. 26-29		
105	W. 28	Let the dead bury the dead	viii. 19-22		ix. 57-62	
106	"	**Crosses lake eastward**	viii. 18, 23	iv. 35, 36	viii. 22	
107	"	*Wind and waves stilled*	viii. 24-27	iv. 37-41	viii. 23-25	
108	"	*Gadarene Demoniac healed*	viii. 28-34	v. 1-20	viii. 26-39	
109	"	**Crosses lake westward**		v. 21	viii. 40	
110	"	Starts for Jairus' house	ix. 18, 19	v. 22-24	viii. 41, 42	
111	"	*Issue of blood healed*	ix. 20-22	v. 25-34	viii. 43-48	
112	"	Arrives at ruler's house	ix. 23-26	v. 35-43	viii. 49-56	
113	"	*Two blind men healed*	ix. 27-31			
114	"	*Dumb demoniac healed*	ix. 32-34			
115	"	**Another tour**	ix. 35-38	vi. 1		
116	"	**Second rejection at Nazareth**	xiii. 53-58	vi. 1-6		
117	Sp. 29	Twelve sent to preach	x. 1-15	vi. 7-13	ix. 1-6	
118	"	Twelve to be persecuted	x. 16-23		xii. 11, 12	
119	"	Twelve to be rewarded	x. 24-42		xii. 1-10	
120	"	Gospel will make strife	x. 34-42		xii. 49-53	
121	"	John the Baptist beheaded	xiv. 6-12	vi. 21-29		
122	"	Herod's perplexity	xiv. 1, 2	vi. 14-16	ix. 7-9	
123	"	**Crosses lake eastward**	xiv. 13	vi. 30-32	ix. 10	
124	"	*Five thousand fed*	xiv. 14-21	vi. 33-44	ix. 11-17	vi. 1-14
125	"	**Jesus walks on the water**	xiv. 22-	vi. 45-52		vi. 15-21
126	"	**Comes to Gennesaret**	xiv. 34-36	vi. 53-56		vi. 22-
127	"	Jesus the Bread of Life				vi. 22-71
128	"	Some disciples leave him				vi. 66-71
129	"	Third Passover not attended				vii
130	"	Traditions of Pharisees	xv. 1-20	vii. 1-23		
131	"	**Goes to border of Tyre**	xv. 21	vii. 24		
132	"	*Canaanite girl healed*	xv. 22-28	vii. 25-30		
133	"	**Goes through Sidon to lake**	xv. 29	vii. 31		
134	"	*Deaf man and others healed*	xv. 30, 31	vii. 32-37		
135	"	*Four thousand fed*	xv. 32-38	viii. 1-9		
136	"	**Goes to Dalmanutha**	xv. 39	viii. 10		
137	"	Refuses a sign	xvi. 1-4	viii. 11, 12		
138	"	**Crosses lake eastward**	xvi. 5	viii. 13		
139	"	Leaven of the Pharisees	xvi. 5-12	viii. 14-21		
140	"	**Arrives at Bethsaida**		viii. 22		
141	"	*Blind man healed*		viii. 22-26		
142	Su. 29	**Goes to Cæsarea Philippi**		viii. 27		
143	"	Peter confesses Christ	xvi. 13-20	viii. 27-30	ix. 18-21	
144	"	Jesus predicts his own death	xvi. 21	viii. 31, 32	ix. 21, 22	
145	"	Peter rebuked	xvi. 22-27	viii. 33-38	ix. 23-26	
146	"	Transfiguration predicted	xvi. 28	ix. 1	ix. 27	
147	"	*Jesus transfigured*	xvii. 1-13	ix. 2-13	ix. 28-36	
148	"	*Lunatic boy healed*	xvii. 14-21	ix. 14-29	ix. 37-43	
149	"	**Return to Galilee**		ix. 30		
150	"	Second prediction of death	xvii. 22, 23	ix. 31, 32	ix. 44, 45	
151	"	**Arrives at Capernaum**		ix. 33		
152	"	Tribute money at Capernaum	xvii. 24-27			
153	"	Jesus teaches humility	xviii. 1-4	ix. 33-37	ix. 46-48	
154	"	No neutrality		ix. 38-41	ix. 49, 50	
155	"	Better to pluck out eye	xviii. 5-9	ix. 42-50		
156	"	Love for the wanderers	xviii. 10-14			
157	"	How to treat offenders	xviii. 15-22			
158	"	Parable, Unmerciful Servant	xviii. 23-35			
159	Au. 29	**Jesus leaves Galilee secretly**			ix. 51	vii. 2-10
160	"	**Inhospitable Samaritans**			ix. 52-56	
161	"	The Seventy sent out			x. 1-16	
162	"	At feast of Tabernacles				vii. 11-53
163	"	**Goes to Mount of Olives**				viii. 1
164	"	**Returns to Jerusalem**				viii. 2

Prob. Order.	DATE.	EVENT OR TEACHING.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
165	Au. 29	Adulteress released (?)				viii. 3–11
166	"	Declares his divinity				viii. 12–58
167	"	Attempt to stone Jesus				viii. 59
168	"	*Blind man at Jerusalem*				ix. 1–12
169	"	Pharisees' investigation				ix. 13–41
170	"	Parables: Fold; Door; Sheep				x. 1–21
171	"	Return of the Seventy			x. 17–24	
172	W. 29	At Feast of Dedication				x. 22–38
173	"	**Goes beyond Jordan**				x. 39–42
174	"	Parable, Good Samaritan			x. 25–37	
175	"	**Visit to Martha and Mary**			x. 38–42	
176	"	*Infirm woman healed*			xiii. 10–21	
177	"	Lazarus sickens and dies				xi. 1–16
178	"	**On the way to Jerusalem**			xiii 22–30	
179	"	Mourning for Jerusalem			xiii 31–35	
180	"	*Dropsical man healed*			xiv. 1–6	
181	"	Discourse on Feasts			xiv. 7–14	
182	"	Parable, Great Supper			xiv 15–24	
183	"	Parables: Tower; Warring King			xiv 25–35	
184	"	Parables: Lost Sheep; Lost Money			xv 1–32	
185	"	Parable, Prodigal Son			xv 11–32	
186	"	Parable, Unjust Steward			xvi 1–13	
187	"	Parable, Rich Man and Lazarus			xvi 19–31	
188	"	**Jesus comes to Bethany**				xi. 17
189	"	*Raising of Lazarus*				xi. 18–45
190	"	Resolve to destroy Jesus				xi. 46–53
191	"	**Retreats to Ephraim**				xi. 54–57
192	"	Forgiveness of brethren			xvii. 1–4	
193	"	Unprofitable servants			xvii. 5–10	
194	Sp. 30	**Goes north and joins the Passover caravan**	xix. 1	x. 1	xvii. 11	
195	"	*Ten lepers healed*			xvii. 12–19	
196	"	Second advent sudden			xvii. 20–37	
197	"	Parable, Unjust Judge			xviii. 1–8	
198	"	Parable, Pharisee and Publican			xviii. 9–14	
199	"	**Arrives in Peræa**	xix. 1, 2	x. 1		
200	"	Doctrine of divorce	xix. 3–12	x. 2–12	xvi. 18	
201	"	Little children blessed	xix. 13–15	x. 13–16	xviii. 15–17	
202	"	Rich young man	xix. 16–22	x. 17–22	xviii. 18–23	
203	"	Danger of riches	xix. 23–26	x. 23–27	xviii. 24–27	
204	"	Reward of sacrifice	xix. 27–30	x. 28–31	xviii. 28–30	
205	"	Parable, The Laborers	xx. 1–16			
206	"	**Third prediction of death**	xx. 17–19	x. 32–34	xviii. 31–34	
207	"	Ambition of James and John	xx. 20–28	x. 35–45		
208	M. 30	**At Jericho;** *Bartimæus*	xx. 29–34	x. 46–52	xviii. 35–43	
209	"	**At Jericho;** Zacchæus			xix. 1–10	
210	M. 31	Parable, The Pounds			xix. 11–27	
211	"	**Arrives at Bethany, Friday**				xii. 1
212	Ap. 1	Feast at Bethany, Saturday night	xxvi. 6–13	xiv. 3–9		xii. 2–9
213	"	Plot against Lazarus				xii. 10, 11
214	" 2	**Triumphal entry, Sunday**	xxi. 1–11	xi. 1–11	xix. 28–44	xii. 12–19
215	" 2	**Goes to Bethany, Sunday evening**		xi. 11		
216	" 3	**Returns to city, Monday morning**		xi. 12		
217	" 3	*Fig tree cursed*	xxi. 18, 19	xi. 12–14		
218	" 3	Second cleansing of Temple	xxi. 12–16	xi. 15–18	xix. 45–48	
219	" 3	**Goes to Bethany, Monday evening**	xxi. 17	xi. 19		
220	" 4	**Returns to city, Tuesday morning**		xi. 20		
221	" 4	*Fig tree dead*	xxi. 20–22	xi. 20–26		
222	" 4	Jesus' authority questioned	xxi. 23–27	xi. 27–33	xx. 1–8	
223	" 4	Parable, Two Sons	xxi. 28–32			
224	" 4	Parable, Wicked Husbandmen	xxi. 33–46	xii. 1–12	xx. 9–19	
225	" 4	Parable, Wedding Garment	xxii. 1–14			
226	" 4	Tribute to Cæsar	xxii. 15–22	xii. 13–17	xx. 20–26	
227	" 4	Question of resurrection	xxii. 23–33	xii. 18–27	xx. 27–38	
228	" 4	The chief commandment	xxii. 34–40	xii. 28–34	xx. 39, 40	
229	" 4	Whose Son is Messiah?	xxii. 41–46	xii. 35–37	xx. 41–44	
230	" 4	Hypocrisy of Scribes and Pharisees	xxiii. 1–12	xii. 38–40	xx. 45–47	
231	" 4	Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees	xxiii. 13–39			
232	" 4	The widow's mite		xii. 41–44	xxi. 1–4	
233	" 4	Coming of the Greeks				xii. 20–36
234	" 4	Destruction of Jerusalem	xxiv. 1–28	xiii. 1–23	xxi. 5–24	
235	" 4	End of the world	xxiv. 29–35	xiii. 24–31	xxi. 25–33	
236	" 4	Exhortation to watch	xxiv. 36–51	xiii. 32–37	xxi. 34–36	
237	" 4	Exhortation to watch			xii. 35–48	
238	" 4	Parable, Ten Virgins	xxv. 1–13			
239	" 4	Parable, Talents	xxv. 14–30			
240	" 4	Parable, Sheep and Goats	xxv. 31–46			
241	" 4	**Goes to Bethany, Tuesday evening**			xxi. 37, 38	
242	" 5	Plots against Jesus, Wednesday	xxvi. 1–5	xiv. 1, 2	xxii. 1, 2	
243	" 5	Judas offers betrayal, Wednesday	xxvi. 14–16	xiv. 10, 11	xxii. 3–6	
244	" 6	Preparation for Passover, Thursday	xxvi. 17–19	xiv. 12–16	xxii. 7–13	
245	" 6	**Beginning of Feast, Thursday**		xiv. 17	xxii. 14	xiii. 1
246	" 6	Strife about precedence			xxii. 24	
247	" 6	Jesus washes feet				xiii. 2–11
248	" 6	Jesus teaches humility			xxii. 25–32	xiii. 12–17
249	" 6	Jesus predicts betrayal	xxvi. 20–25	xiv. 18–21	xxii. 21–23	xiii. 18–26
250	" 6	Departure of Judas				xiii. 27–35

Prob. Order.	DATE.	EVENT OR TEACHING.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
251	Ap 6	Peter's denial predicted			xxii. 33, 34	xiii. 36–38
252	" 6	Lord's Supper instituted	xxvi. 26–29	xiv. 22–25	xxii. 15–20	
253	" 6	Comforter promised				xiv. 1–31[1]
254	" 6	**Start for Gethsemane**	xxvi. 30	xiv. 26	xxii. 39	xiv. 31[2]
255	" 6	Parable, The Vine (on the way)				xv. 1–27
256	" 6	Mission of Holy Spirit				xvi. 1–33
257	" 6	Intercessory prayer				xvii. 1–26
258	" 6	The two swords			xxii. 35–38	
259	" 6	Peter's denial again predicted	xxvi. 31–35	xiv. 27–31		
260	" 6	**Arrival at Gethsemane**	xxvi. 36	xiv. 32		xviii. 1
261	" 6	Agony in Gethsemane	xxvi. 37–46	xiv. 33–42	xxii. 40–46	
262	" 7	*Betrayal, and Malchus, Friday before day*	xxvi. 47–56	xiv. 43–52	xxii. 47–53	xviii. 2–11
263	" 7	**Jesus led to Annas**	xxvi. 57, 58	xiv. 53, 54	xxii. 54	xviii. 12–16
264	" 7	Examination by Annas				xviii. 19–23
265	" 7	Peter's first denial	xxvi. 69, 70	xiv. 66–68	xxii. 55–57	xviii. 17, 18
266	" 7	Peter's second denial	xxvi. 71, 72	xiv. 69	xxii. 58	xviii. 25
267	" 7	Peter's third denial, as Jesus is led to Caiaphas	xxvi. 73–75	xiv. 70–72	xxii. 59–62	xviii. 26, 27
268	" 7					xviii. 24
269	" 7	Jesus before Caiaphas	xxvi. 59–68	xiv. 55–65		
270	" 7	Jesus mocked and beaten			xxii. 63–65	
271	" 7	Morning session of Council, Friday morning	xxvii. 1	xv. 1[1]	xxii. 66–71	
272	" 7	Jesus led to Pilate	xxvii. 2	xv. 1[2]	xxiii. 1, 2	xviii. 28–32
273	" 7	Judas' remorse	xxvii. 3–10			
274	" 7	Pilate examines Jesus alone	xxvii. 11	xv. 2	xxiii. 3	xviii. 33–38[1]
275	" 7	Brought out and examined	xxvii. 12–14	xv. 3–5	xxiii. 4–6	xviii. 38[2]
276	" 7	Sent to Herod, and questioned			xxiii. 7–10	
277	" 7	Mocked and returned			xxiii. 11, 12	
278	" 7	Barabbas	xxvii. 15–26[1]	xv. 6–15[1]	xxiii. 13–25[1]	xviii. 39, 40
279	" 7	Jesus scourged and mocked	xxvii. 26[2]–30	xv. 15[2]–19		xix. 1–3
280	" 7	Pilate's final effort				xix. 4–15
281	" 7	Delivered for Crucifixion	xxvii. 31	xv. 20	xxiii. 25[2]	xix. 16
282	" 7	**Procession to Calvary**	xxvii. 32	xv. 21	xxiii. 26–32	xix. 17
283	" 7	Crucifixion, parting of garments, and superscription	xxvii. 33–38	xv. 22–28	xxiii. 33, 38	xix. 18–24
284	" 7	Jesus prays for enemies			xxiii. 34	
285	" 7	Jesus derided	xxvii. 39–44	xv. 29–32	xxiii. 35–37, 39	
286	" 7	The penitent robber			xxiii. 40–43	
287	" 7	Jesus provides for his mother				xix. 25–27
288	" 7	Darkness and abandonment	xxvii. 45–47	xv. 33–35	xxiii. 44, 45[1]	
289	" 7	The vinegar given	xxvii. 48, 49	xv. 36		xix. 28, 29
290	" 7	It is finished				xix. 30
291	" 7	Gives up his spirit	xxvii. 50	xv. 37	xxiii. 46	xix. 30
292	" 7	*The veil rent*	xxvii. 51	xv. 38	xxiii. 45[2]	
293	" 7	*Earthquake opening tombs*	xxvii. 51[2]–53			
294	" 7	Centurion's testimony	xxvii. 54	xv. 39	xxiii. 47	
295	" 7	Remorse of the people			xxiii. 48	
296	" 7	The women present	xxvii. 55, 56	xv. 40, 41	xxiii. 49	
297	" 7	Evidence of his death				xix. 31–37
298	" 7	The burial	xxvii. 57–61	xv. 42–47	xxiii. 50–56	xix. 38–42
299	" 7	The guard and seal	xxvii. 62–66			
300	" 7	Preparation for anointing		xvi. 1	xxiii. 56	
301	" 9	*Opening of the tomb, Sunday*	xxviii. 2–4			
302	" 9	Visit of the women	xxviii. 1	xvi. 2–4	xxiv. 1, 2	xx. 1
303	" 9	*Mary Magdalene, first message*	xxviii. 8[2]		xxiv. 9[2]–11	xx. 2
304	" 9	*Vision to other women*	xxviii. 5–8[1]	xvi. 5–8	xxiv. 3–9	
305	" 9	Visit of Peter and John			xxiv. 12	xx. 3–10
306	" 9	*Mary Magdalene sees Jesus*	xxviii. 9, 10	xvi. 9		xx. 11–17
307	" 9	Mary Magdalene tells the disciples		xvi. 10, 11		xx. 18
308	" 9	Guard report to chief priests	xxviii. 11–15			
309	" 9	*Appearance to Peter*			xxiv. 34	(I. Cor. xv. 5)
310	" 9	**The walk to Emmaus**		xvi. 12, 13	xxiv. 13–27	
311	" 9	*The recognition at Emmaus*			xxiv. 28–32	
312	" 9	The return from Emmaus			xxiv. 33–35	
313	" 9	*Appearance to the ten*		xvi. 14	xxiv. 36–43	xx. 19–23
314	" 16	*Appearance to the eleven*				xx. 24–31
315	Sp. 30	**Appearance at the lake**				xxi. 1–14
316	"	*Second miraculous draught*				xxi. 5–14
317	"	Restoration of Peter				xxi. 15–19
318	"	Destiny of John				xxi. 20–25
319	"	**On mountain in Galilee**	xxviii. 16–20			
320	Ma. 30	**Again in Jerusalem**			xxiv. 44–49	(Acts i. 4, 5)
321	"	**Final appearance and ascension**		xvi. 15–19	xxiv. 50, 51	(Acts i. 6–11)
322	"	Return of apostles			xxiv. 52	(Acts i. 12–14)
323	"	Mission begun		xvi. 20	xxiv. 53	

This type indicates change of location.
This type indicates miracles.
This type indicates non-miraculous events and teachings.

CHART OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

(FROM ANDREWS.)

Annunciation to Zacharias	October	6	B. C.
Annunciation to Mary	April	5	"
Mary visits Elizabeth, and remains three months	April–June	5	"
Birth of John the Baptist	June	5	"
Jesus born at Bethlehem	December	5	"
The angel and the shepherds	December	5	"
Presentation of Jesus	February	4	"
Coming of the Magi	February	4	"
Flight of Jesus into Egypt	February	4	"
Return to Nazareth, and sojourn there	May	4	"
Jesus, at twelve years of age, attends the Passover	April	8	A. D.
John the Baptist begins his labors	Summer	26	"
Baptism of Jesus	January	27	"
Jesus tempted in the wilderness	January February	27	"
Deputation of priests and Levites to the Baptist	February	27	"
Jesus returns to Galilee	February	27	"
Wedding at Cana of Galilee	February	27	"
First passover of Jesus' ministry; cleansing the Temple	April	27	"
Jesus begins to baptize (by his disciples)	May	27	"
Jesus departs into Galilee, through Samaria	December	27	"
A few weeks spent by Jesus in retirement	January–April	28	"
The Baptist imprisoned	March	28	"
Second passover; healing of impotent man	April	28	"
Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee	April–May	28	"
Calling of the four disciples, and healings at Capernaum	April–May	28	"
First circuit in Galilee; healing of the leper	May	28	"
Return to Capernaum, and healing of the paralytic	Summer	28	"
Plucking the corn, and healing the man with withered hand	Summer	28	"
Choice of Apostles, and Sermon on the Mount	Summer	28	"
Healing of centurion's servant at Capernaum	Summer	28	"
Journey to Nain, and raising of the widow's son	Summer	28	"
Message to Jesus of the Baptist	Summer	28	"
Jesus anointed by the woman, a sinner	Autumn	28	"
Healing at Capernaum of the blind and dumb possessed; charge of the Pharisees that he casts out devils by Beelzebub	Autumn	28	"
Teaching in parables, and stilling of the tempest	Autumn	28	"
Healing of demoniacs in Gergesa, and return to Capernaum	Autumn	28	"
Matthew's feast; healing of woman with issue of blood, and raising of Jairus' daughter	Autumn	28	"
Healing of two blind men, and a dumb possessed; Pharisees blaspheme	Autumn	28	"
Second visit to Nazareth; sending of the twelve	Winter	29	"
Death of the Baptist; Jesus returns to Capernaum	Winter	29	"
Crossing of the sea, and feeding of the 5,000; return to Capernaum	Spring	29	"
Discourse at Capernaum respecting the bread of life	April	29	"
Jesus visits the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; heals the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman; visits the region of Decapolis; heals one with an impediment in his speech; feeds the 4,000	Summer	27	"
Jesus returns to Capernaum; is tempted by the Pharisees; reproves their hypocrisy; again crosses the sea; heals blind man at Bethsaida	Summer	29	"
Peter's confession that he is the Christ; the transfiguration	Summer	29	"

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.—CONTINUED.

Healing of lunatic child	Summer	29	A. D.
Jesus journeys through Galilee, teaching the disciples: at Capernaum pays the tribute money; goes up to the feast of tabernacles	Autumn	29	"
He teaches in the temple; efforts to arrest him	October	29	"
An adulteress is brought before him; attempt to stone him; healing of a man blind from birth; return to Galilee	October	29	"
Final departure from Galilee; is rejected at Samaria; sending of the seventy	November	29	"
Jesus is attended by great multitudes; parable of the good Samaritan	November	29	"
Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool	November–December	29	"
Jesus is told of the murder of the Galileans by Pilate; parable of the fig-tree; healing of a woman, eighteen years sick	November–December	29	"
Feast of dedication; visit to Mary and Martha; the Jews at Jerusalem attempt to stone him; he goes beyond Jordan	December	29	"
Jesus dines with a Pharisee, and heals a man with dropsy; parables of the great supper, of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of silver, of the unjust steward, of the rich man and Lazarus	December	29	"
Resurrection of Lazarus; counsel of the Jews to put him to death; he retires to Ephraim	January–February	30	"
Sojourn in Ephraim till passover at hand; journeys on the border of Samaria and Galilee; healing of ten lepers; parables of the unjust judge, and of Pharisee and publican; teaching respecting divorce; blessing of children; the young ruler and parable of laborers in the vineyard			
Jesus again announces his death; ambition of James and John	February–March	30	"
Healing of blind men at Jericho; Zaccheus; parable of the pounds; departure to Bethany	March	30	"
Supper at Bethany, and anointing of Jesus by Mary	March	30	"
Entry into Jerusalem; visit to the temple, and return to Bethany	Saturday, April 1	30	"
Cursing of the fig-tree; second purification of the temple; return to Bethany	Sunday, April 2	30	"
Teaching in the temple; parables of the two sons, of the wicked husbandmen, of the king's son; attempts of his enemies to entangle him; the poor widow; the Greeks who desire to see him; a voice heard from heaven; departure from the temple to the Mount of Olives; discourse respecting the end of the world; return to Bethany; agreement of Judas with the priests to betray him	Monday, April 3	30	"
Jesus seeks retirement at Bethany	Tuesday, April 4	30	"
Sending of Peter and John to prepare the passover; the paschal supper	Wednesday, April 5	30	"
Events at paschal supper	Thursday, April 6	30	"
After supper Jesus foretells the denials of Peter; speaks of the coming of the Comforter, and ends with prayer	Thursday evening, April 6	30	"
Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane	Thursday evening, April 6	30	"
Jesus is given into the hands of Judas	Thursday evening, April 6	30	"
Jesus is led to the house of Annas, and thence to the palace of Caiaphas; is condemned for blasphemy	Thursday, midnight, April 6	30	"
Mockeries of his enemies; he is brought the second time before the council, and thence taken before Pilate	Friday, 1–5 A. M., April 7	30	"
Charge of sedition; Pilate attempts to release him, but is forced to scourge him, and give him up to be crucified	Friday, 5–6 A. M., April 7	30	"
Jesus is crucified at Golgotha	Friday, 6–9 A. M., April 7	30	"
Upon the cross is reviled by his enemies; commends his mother to John; darkness covers the land; he dies; the earth shakes, and rocks are rent	Friday, 9–12 A. M., April 7	30	"
His body taken down and given to Joseph, and laid in his sepulcher	Friday, 12 M.–3 P. M., April 7	30	"
Resurrection of Jesus, and appearance to Mary Magdalene	Friday, 3–6 P. M., April 7	30	"
Appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus; to Peter and to the eleven at Jerusalem	Sunday, A. M., April 9	30	"
Appearance to the apostles and Thomas	Sunday, P. M., April 9	30	"
Appearance to seven disciples at Sea of Tiberias, and to 500 at mountain in Galilee	Sunday, April 16	30	"
Final appearance to the disciples at Jerusalem, and ascension to heaven	April–May	30	"
	Thursday, May 18	30	"

SELF-PRONOUNCING

DICTIONARY OF SCRIPTURE PROPER NAMES

FOUND IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS FOR 1896.

Containing the Names of all Persons and Places, with the Pronunciation and Meaning; and Reference to Date of the Lessons and Passage of Scripture where Mentioned.

Aaron, ar'-on, *light.* The son of Amram and Jochebed, and the elder brother of Moses and Miriam. He was a Levite, and is first mentioned in Ex. iv. 14, as one who could "speak well." He became the first high priest when that office was instituted (Jan. 5—Luke i. 5).

Abia, ă-bī'ă. A descendant of Eleazer, who gave his name to the eighth of the twenty-four courses, or classes, into which the priests were divided by David. Each class served during a week once in every six months. To the course of Abia belonged Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (Jan. 5—Luke i. 5).

Abigail, ab'ī-gāil. The beautiful wife of Nabal, a wealthy man of Carmel, who supplied David and his followers with needed provisions. Nabal died, and David married his widow (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 2).

Abinadab, ă-bĭn'ă-dăb. A Levite, a native of Kirjathjearim, in whose house the ark remained twenty years (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 3).

Abishai, ă-bĭsh'ă-i. One of the three famous warrior sons of Zeruiah, brother of Joab and Asahel, who served under King David (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 10).

Abner, ăb'nĕr, *father of light.* Son of Ner. He was commander-in-chief of Saul's army. He proclaimed Ishbosheth king of Israel, as opposed to David, who was king of Judah (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 8).

Abraham, ā'brā-ham, *father of a multitude.* The son of Terah, and progenitor of the Hebrew nation. His character was "free, simple, manly, full of hospitality and family affection, truthful—a grand example of faith in God" (April 5—Luke xiii. 28).

Absalom, ăb'sa-lŏm, *father of peace.* The third son of David by Maacha, daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, a Syrian district on the frontier of the Holy Land. For misdeeds he was banished from his father's court, and led a rebellion against him. His forces defeated, he was caught while escaping, his long hair entangled in the branches of a terebinth, where he was killed (Aug. 23—II. Sam. xv. 1).

Ahio, ă-hī'o. One of the sons of Abinadab, who accompanied the ark of God on its journey from Gibeah to Jerusalem (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 3).

Ahinoam, ă-hĭn'o-am. The Jezreelitess, one of David's wives who went up with him to Hebron (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 2).

Ahithophel, ă-hith'o-phel. The Gilonite, David's counsellor. One of the conspirators with Absalom. Father of Ammiel, grandfather of Bathsheba (Aug. 23—II. Sam. xv. 12).

Ammiel, ăm'mī-el. Son of Ahithophel, and father of Machir and Bathsheba (Aug. 2—II. Sam. ix. 6).

Ammonites, ăm'mŏn-ītes, *strong people,* or *son of my kindred.* Children of Ammon. The nation decended from Ben Ammi, the son of Lot. They were idolaters, and worshiped the god Chemosh, although Milcom or Moloch is called their abomination, and is one of the gods which Solomon "went after" when he "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (Dec. 6—I. Kings xi. 5).

Ashtoreth, ăsh'tŏ'rĕth. The goddess of the Zidonians. One of the "strange gods" King Solomon "went after" (Dec. 6—I. Kings xi. 5).

Ashur, ăsh'ur, *happy, blessedness.* The name of the tribe called after the eleventh son of Jacob. The territory of Ashur lay on the shore of the Mediterranean, extending from Carmel to Zidon (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 19).

Ashurites, ăsh'ŭr-ītes. The people of the tribe of Ashur. They joined Ishbosheth (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 19).

Baale, bā'ă'lē, *lords* or *cities of Judah.* Of Judah. Another name for Kirjathjearim (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 2).

Bathsheba, bath'shĕ-ba, *daughter of an oath.* Daughter of Ammiel, son of Ahithophel, wife of Uriah the Hittite, later of David, and mother of Solomon (Oct. 4—I. Kings i. 28).

Beer-Sheba, bē'er-shē'ba, *well of the oath.* A city on the south frontier of Palestine, "the place of arrival and departure of caravans trading between Palestine and the countries lying in that direction." The most southerly place of the country. From "Dan to Beer-Sheba," from "Beer-Sheba to Dan" was at one time the formula for the whole of the "promised land" (Oct. 18—I. Kings iv. 25).

Benaiah, bē-nā'iah, *built of Jah.* Son of Jehoida, the chief priest of the tribe of Levi. David set him over his body-guard, and he ranked as one of the three "mighty men," and the thirty "valiant men of the armies" (Oct. 4—I. Kings i. 32).

Benjamin, ben'ja-min, *son of the right hand, i. e., fortunate.* The youngest of the children of Jacob, and son of Rachel, who died in the act of giving him birth, naming him with her last breath, Benoni, "son of my sorrow." This was by Jacob changed into Benjamin. He was Joseph's one full brother (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 9).

Bethany, beth'a-ny, *house of dates.* A village situated "at" the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem, on or near the usual road from that city to Jericho. It was the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and intimately associated in our minds with the most familiar acts and scenes of the life of Christ (June 21—Luke xxiv. 50).

Bethlehem, beth'-le-hem, *house of bread.* One of the oldest towns in Palestine; chiefly noted

as the birthplace of our Lord and Saviour (Dec. 20—Matt. ii. 1).

Calvary, căl′vā-ry, *a skull.* The Greek interpretation of the Hebrew Golgotha. The place of the crucifixion (June 14—Luke xxiii. 33).

Chalcol, chăl′cŏl. A son of Mahol the Ezrahite, one of the four famous wise men (Oct. 18—I. Kings iv. 31).

Chemosh, kē′mosh. The god worshiped by the Moabites, and called the abomination of Moab. King Solomon "built a high place for Chemosh, in the hill that is before Jerusalem" (Dec. 6—I. Kings xi. 7).

Cherethites, chĕr′eth-ītes, who with the Pelethites formed the life-guards or body-guard of King David (Oct. 4—I. Kings i. 38).

Christ, crīst, *anointed.* The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah. A title of Jesus the Saviour (March 1—Luke ix. 20).

Dan, dăn. *Judge.* One of the twelve tribes of Israel. "From Dan even unto Beer-Sheba," from the extreme north of the Holy Land to the extreme south. The phrase found in Judges xx. 1, first came into use shortly after the Danites took Laish, and called it Dan (Oct. 18—I. Kings v. 25).

Darda, där′da. One of a family famed for wisdom. A son of Mahol the Ezrahite (Oct. 18—I. Kings iv. 31).

David, da′-vid, *beloved.* The youngest son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. One of the most remarkable men in either sacred or secular history. He was "the Lord's anointed," chosen by God to be the king of Israel, instead of Saul, and consecrated to that office by the venerable prophet Samuel long before he actually came to the throne, for which God prepared him by the gift of his Spirit, and a long course of vicissitudes and dangers (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 1).

Egypt, e′-gypt, *black.* A country occupying the northeastern angle of Africa, colonized by the descendants of Ham, the son of Noah. Its ancient culture and prosperity are attested by the Bible, as well as by the numerous monuments and ruins still in existence. As early as the age of the great pyramid it must have been densely populated (July 26—II. Sam. vii. 6).

Elias, ē-lī′-as. Greek form of Hebrew name Elijah. Which see.

Elijah, e-li′-jah, *my God is Jehovah.* A native of Tishbeth, in Gilead. He was one of the most eminent and honored of the Hebrew prophets. He was bold, faithful, stern, self-denying, and zealous for the honor of God. His history is one of the most extraordinary on record, and is fraught with instruction (Jan. 5—Luke i. 17).

Elisabeth, ē-lĭs′a-beth, *one who worships God.* Of the daughters of Aaron, wife of Zacharias, and mother of John the Baptist (Jan. 5—Luke i. 5).

Ephraim, ē′phrā-ĭm, *double fruitfulness.* The second son of Joseph, also the name of one of the twelve tribes. The goodly heritage invoked was promised in the blessing of Moses: "Precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof" on the "ten thousands of Ephraim" (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 9).

Esaias, ē-sā′yăs. See Isaiah (Jan. 26—Luke iv. 17).

Ethan, ē′than. The Ezrahite, son of Mahol (Oct. 18—I. Kings iv. 31).

Galilee, găl′ī-lee, *circuit.* In the time of our Lord, all Palestine was divided into three provinces: Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. The latter included the whole northern section of the country (Jan. 26—Luke iv. 14).

Gath, găth, *a wine press.* One of the five chief cities of the Philistines. A notable city in the border nearest Jerusalem. See Gittites.

Geshur, gē′shŭr, *a bridge.* A small principality of Syria, forming a part of Bashan. One of King David's wives was a daughter of King Talmai of Geshur, and her son Absalom sought refuge there (Aug. 23—II. Sam. xv. 8).

Gibeah, gĭb′e-a, *a hill* where the ark of God was in the house of Abinadab, when David determined to bring it to Jerusalem (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 3).

Gibeon, gĭb′e-on. The great high place where Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings upon the altar, and where, in the wonderful vision, God gave him his choice of all good gifts (Oct. 11—I. Kings iii. 5).

Gihon, gī′hon, *a stream, a breaking forth from fountains.* A place, probably a spring, near Jerusalem, where Solomon was anointed and proclaimed king (Oct. 4—I. Kings i. 33).

Gilead, gĭl′e-ăd, *a hard, rocky region; heap of witness.* A mountainous region east of the Jordan, extending from the south end of the Sea of Galilee to the north end of the Dead Sea, about sixty miles. Its breadth is about twenty miles (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 9).

Giloh, gī′lō, *exile.* A town in the mountains of Judah, the native place of Ahithophel, who lived here when Absalom sent for him to Hebron. Giloh was also the scene of his miserable death (Aug. 23—II. Sam. xv. 12).

Gilonite, gī′lōn-īte. A native of Giloh. The designation of Ahithophel (Aug. 23—II. Sam. xv. 12).

Gittites, gĭt′ītes. The inhabitants of Gath. Obededom was a Gittite (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 10).

Hadarezer, hăd′-ăr-ē′zĕr. Aramite, king of Zobah. Son of Rehob. David defeated his army at Helam (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 16).

Hebron, hē′bron, *alliance, friendship.* The oldest town of Palestine, occupying a lofty position among the mountains of Judah, 2,800 feet above the Mediterranean. Sometimes called Mamre. While David reigned over Judah, Hebron was his residence (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 1).

Helam, hē′lam, *stronghold.* A place between the Jordan and the Euphrates, where David gained a victory over the Syrians (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 16).

Heman, hē′man. One of the four sons of Mahol, famous for wisdom (Oct. 18—I. Kings iv. 31).

Herod, her′od. The name of four princes, Idumæans by descent, who governed either the whole or part of Judæa under the Romans. Herod the Great ruled Judæa thirty-five years. He it was who rebuilt the temple (Jan. 5—Luke i. 5).

Herod Antipas. The Tetrarch of Galilee and Perræa, son of Herod the Great. He married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, unlawfully. John, rebuking him for this sin, was imprisoned and finally beheaded. It was to this Herod that Pilate sent Jesus for examination (Jan. 19—Luke iii. 19).

Herod Philip I., her′od fil′-ip. Was the son of Herod the Great and Mariamne. He married Herodias (*g. v.*), by whom he had a daughter, Salome (Jan. 19—Luke iii. 19).

Herod the Tetrarch, her′od tet′rarch. See Herod Antipas.

Herodias, he-ro′-di-as. Daughter of Aristobulus, and sister of Agrippa I. First married to Herod Philip I. She eloped from him to marry Herod Antipas, her step-uncle (Jan. 19—Luke iii. 19).

Hiram, hī′ram. King of Tyre in the days of David and Solomon. He sent messengers with congratulations to David the King, with skilled workmen and timber to build him a house. He also furnished the cedar trees to aid in building the temple (July 12—II. Sam. v. 11).

Isaac, ī′sak, *laughter.* The son whom Sarah, in accordance with the divine promise, bore to

Abraham, in the hundredth year of his age, at Gerar (April 5—Luke xiii. 28).

Isaiah, ī-s i'ah, *salvation of Jehovah.* The Old Testament book from which Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth, after his temptation. Isaiah the prophet, one of the most sublime and variously gifted instruments which the Spirit of God has employed (Jan. 26—Luke iv. 17).

Ishbosheth, ĭsh'bo-sheth. "The youngest of Saul's four sons, and his legitimate successor." His father and three brothers perished at the battle of Gilboa. He was then thirty-five years old. Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, "brought him over to Mahanaim and made him king" over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Benjamin, and all Israel (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 8).

Ishtob, ĭsh'tŏb. A small Syrian or Aramite district or kingdom (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 8).

Israel, ĭs'ra-ĕl, *soldier of God.* The name given to Jacob after his wrestling with the angel at Peniel. It became the national name of the twelve tribes collectively (Feb. 16—Luke vii. 9).

Ittai, ĭt'-ta-ī. The Gittite. A native of Gath, a Philistine in the army of King David, faithful when others proved untrue (Aug. 30—II. Sam. xviii. 12).

Jabesh Gilead, jā'-besh gil'e-ad, *dry land in Gilead.* A city of Gilead, situated on a mountain east of the Jordan. The men of Gilead stole down by night and took the bodies of Saul and his sons, and buried them (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 4).

Jacob, jā'-cŏb, *supplanter.* The second son of Isaac and Rebekah. Born with Esau, when Isaac was 59 and Abraham 159 years old (April 5—Luke xiii. 28).

James, jāmes, the English equivalent for Jacob in the New Testament. Surnamed the Greater, to distinguish him from James the Younger. He was one of the twelve apostles, brother of John the Evangelist, and son of Zebedee and Salome (Feb. 23—Luke viii. 51).

Jebusites, jĕb'ū-sītes. The descendants of Jebus, the third son of Canaan. A mountainous tribe living in the land of Canaan at the time of the conquest (July 12—II. Sam. v. 6).

Jehoiada, jē-hoi'a-da, *known of Jehovah.* Chief priest during David's reign, and probably leader of the Aaronites, or priests, who joined David at Hebron. He was the father of Benaiah, the warrior (Oct. 4—I. Kings i. 32).

Jericho, jĕr'ī-cho, *a fragrant place.* A city of high antiquity, five miles west of the Jordan and seven miles northwest of the Dead Sea. It had a king. Its walls were so considerable that houses were built upon them; and the spoil that was found in it betokened its appearance (March 8—Luke x. 30).

Jerusalem, jē-ru'sā-lēm, *founded in peace* (?). The chief city of the Holy Land, and to Christians the most illustrious in the world. It stands on the mountains of Judæa, about thirty-seven miles east and 2,400 feet above the Mediterranean, occupying three mounts: Moriah, Zion, Acra. It was the religious and political center of the kingdom of Israel; but its chief glory was that in its magnificent temple, where the one living and true God lived and revealed himself (Jan. 12—Luke ii. 41).

Jesus, jē'sus, *Saviour.* The Greek form of the name Joshua or Jeshua, a contraction of Jehoshua, *help of Jehovah,* or *Saviour.* It is assigned in the New Testament to our Lord Jesus Christ, who "saves his people from their sins" (Jan. 12—Luke ii. 43).

Jezreel, jez're-el, *what God planteth.* A city in the south of Judah, where David took a wife, Ahinoam. One of the important towns that remained true to the house of Saul (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 9).

Joab, jō'ab. A son of Zeruiah. He was over the host of King David, and a noted warrior (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 9).

John, jŏn, *Jehovah is gracious.* The Baptist, the Baptizer, the Forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of the priestly race by both parents, Zacharias, a priest of the course of Abia, and Elisabeth of the daughters of Aaron. He was a priest by birth, an austere Nazarite in appearance and mode of life. His divine mission was the subject of prophecy: "My messenger to prepare the way before me." "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Jan. 5—Luke i. 13).

Jonathan, jon'-a-than, *whom Jehovah gave.* The son of Saul, and the friend of David (Aug. 2—II. Sam. ix. 1).

Jordan, jŏr'dan, *flowing down.* The one river of Palestine, has a course of a little more than 200 miles, from the roots of Anti-Lebanon to the head of the Dead Sea (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 17).

Joseph, jō'-sef. The son of Heli, and the reputed father of Jesus Christ. He was a just man of the house and lineage of David, and lived at Nazareth, in Galilee (Jan. 12—Luke ii. 43).

Judæa, jū-dē'a. In the time of Herod, who was called king of Judæa, it included all of the country anciently occupied by the twelve tribes: all Palestine both east and west of the Jordan. At his death it was sub-divided into four parts—Judæa corresponding to the kingdom of Judah in the Old Testament (Jan. 5—Luke i. 5).

Judah, jū'da, *praised, celebrated.* A tribe of the children of Israel. Judah always occupied the post of honor, leading the van while marching. It was the first tribe to receive its allotted possessions west of the Jordan. Consisting of the central mountain ranges, the hill country, rich and productive (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 1).

Lazarus, lăz'a-rus. Greek form of Eleazer, *whom God helps.* The poor man of the parable, who begged for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table (April 16—Luke xvi. 20).

Lebanon, lĕb'a-non, *white.* So named on account of the snow that covered its mountain tops most of the year, or its limestone peaks. A mountain range north of Palestine, celebrated for its cedars, "the glory of Lebanon" (Oct. 18—I. Kings iv. 33).

Levite, lē'vīte. A descendant of Levi (March 8—Luke x. 32).

Luke, lūk. The beloved physician, the faithful companion of Paul, and author of the gospel bearing his name, the third book of the New Testament, and also of Acts of Apostles; he was a man of culture and intellect. He was not an apostle. He was a Gentile, not a Jew (Jan. 5—Lesson 1).

Maacha, mā'a-cha. A small principality of Syria. Called also Syria Maacha (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 8).

Machir, mā'chir. The son of Ammiel in Lodebar, where Mephibosheth found shelter (Aug. 2—II. Sam. ix. 6).

Mahanaim, mā-hā-nā'im, *camps,* or *double camp.* A town east of the Jordan, on the north bank of the Jabbok, in the territory of Gad, anciently a strong and beautiful city. Here Abner established Ish Bosheth (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 9).

Mahol, mā'hol. The Ezrahite. Father of Ethan, Heman, Chalcol, and Darda—four men famous for their wisdom, which was excelled by Solomon (Oct. 18—I. Kings iv. 31).

Mary, mā'ry. The virgin. The mother of our Lord. We are wholly ignorant of the name and occupation of Mary's parents. She was, like Joseph, of the tribe of Judah, and of the lineage of David. So far as Mary is portrayed to us in Scripture, she is the most tender, the most faithful, humble, patient, and loving of women, but a woman still (Dec. 20—Matt. ii. 11).

Mephibosheth, mē-phĭb'ō-sheth. Son of Jonathan, grandson of King Saul, "who was lame

on both his feet." King David restored to him all that pertained to Saul, and gave him a place at his table as one of his own sons (Aug. 2—II. Sam. ix. 6).

Micha, mī'cha. Son of Mephibosheth, grandson of King Saul (Aug. 2—II. Sam. ix. 13).

Milcom, mĭl'com. See Moloch.

Millo, mĭl'lō, *rampant, fortress.* "The Millo" is the name given to a part of the citadel of Jerusalem, probably the rampart (July 12—II. Sam. v. 9).

Moab, mō'ab, *the desirable land.* Applied both to the son of Lot by his eldest daughter, and to the nation of which he was progenitor. Moab was on the east of the Dead Sea. The religion was idolatrous; their deities, Baal-Peor and Chemosh (Dec. 6—I. Kings xi. 7).

Molech, mō'lĕch. The abomination of the children of Ammon. Solomon built a high place for his strange wives for the worship of this heathen god (Dec. 6—I. Kings xi. 5).

Moses, mō'ses, *drawn.* The law-giver of the Jewish people, and in a certain sense the founder of the Jewish religion. An imposing figure to the Gentile world. In the Jewish nation he was always regarded as their greatest hero (April 16—Luke xvi. 31).

Nabal, nā'bal, *a sheep master.* The Carmelite. A character introduced to us in David's wanderings when he fled from Saul. He refused to furnish provisions to David's followers, who had rendered timely services in protecting Nabal's shepherds. His wife, Abigail, rendered the desired aid, and when Nabal died, married David (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 2).

Nachon, nā'-chŏn. At whose threshing floor Uzzah was killed for touching the ark of God (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 6).

Nain, nā'in, *beauty, pleasantness.* A town of Galilee, where Jesus raised the widow's son to life (Feb. 16—Luke vii. 11).

Nathan, na'than. An eminent Hebrew prophet in the reign of David and Solomon (July 26—II. Sam. vii. 4).

Nazareth, naz'a-reth. The home of Joseph and Mary. Situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon. A quiet, secluded village in which the Saviour of men spent the greater part of his earthly existence (Jan. 12—Luke ii. 51).

Obededom, ō'-bed-ē'dom. The Gittite at whose house David left the ark for three months (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 10).

Pelethites, pē'lĕth-ītes. They with the Cherethites composed the body-guard of King David (Oct. 4—1. Kings i. 38).

Perezuzzah, pē'-rez-ŭz'zah, or Kirjathjearim. Name given by David to the spot where Uzzah was killed (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 8).

Peter, pē'ter, *rock.* Son of Jonas, a fisherman on the Sea of Tiberias, and was brought up in his father's occupation. He was numbered among "the twelve" chosen followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter's original name was Simon, *a hearer.* He denied the Saviour, but proved most loyal—firm, unmovable to the end (Feb. 23—Luke viii.45).

Rehob, rē'hŏb. Aram-Rehob, or Beth-Rehob. One of the many small principalities of Syria (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 8).

Samaria, sā-mā'rī-a, *watch-heighth.* The country lying between Galilee on the north and Judæa on the south (May 3—Luke xvii. 11).

Samaritan, sa-mar'i-tan. An inhabitant of Samaria (which see) (March 8—Luke x. 33).

Saul, saul, *asked for.* The first king of Israel, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin (July 5—II. Sam. ii. 4).

Sheba, shē'ba. A Shemite people, descendants of Jokton. The kingdom of Sheba embraced the greater part of Arabia Felix. It was regarded as the most southern country of the habitable earth. A wealthy, luxurious region. (Nov. 29—I. Kings x. 1).

Sheba, the queen of, hearing of Solomon's wisdom and of the great temple he had built, came to visit him "to prove him with hard questions." "She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, gold, and precious stones (Nov. 29—I. Kings x. 1).

Shobach, shō'băch. Captain of the host of Hadarezer (Aug. 9 - II. Sam. x. 16).

Sidon, sī'don or zī'don, an ancient and wealthy city of Phœnicia (Nov. 1—I. Kings v. 6).

Sidonians, sī-dō'nĭ-ans. People of Sidon of whom King Solomon said, "there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians (Nov. 1—I. Kings v. 6).

Simon, sī'mon, *hearer.* Simon Peter. See Peter (June 7—Luke xxii. 31).

Solomon, sŏl'o-mon, *the peaceful one.* The son of King David and Bathsheba, the child of David's old age. The last born of all his sons, and his successor as king of Israel. He asked of God an "understanding heart." The gift of wisdom was given to him, "like which there had been none before, like which there should be none after (Sept. 6—I. Chron. xxii. 6).

Syrians, syrĭ-ans, *people of a high region.* The inhabitants of Syria, known to the Hebrews as Aram. The name Syria is derived from Tsur or Tyre, signifying the region of Tyre (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 8).

Tyre, tyre, *rock.* A celebrated, very ancient, and splendid city of Phœnicia on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, called "the daughter of Zidon" (July 12—II. Sam. v. 11).

Uzzah, ŭz'zah. One of the sons of Abinadab, who drove the new cart that carried the ark of God on the journey from Gibeah to Jerusalem. He put forth his hand and touched the ark, and God smote him that he died (July 19—II. Sam. vi. 3).

Zacharias, zăch-a-rī'as, *remembered of Jehovah.* A priest of the course of Abia, "whose lot it was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord." He was a righteous man, approved of God, esteemed of men, the father of John the Baptist (Jan. 5—Luke i. 5).

Zadok, zā'dŏk, *righteous.* Son of Ahitub of the house of Eleazer, son of Aaron, the eleventh in descent. One of the two chief priests in the time of King David (Abiathar the other). When Absalom revolted, Zadok was true to David. He anointed Solomon king (Oct. 4—I. Kings i. 32).

Zeruiah, zer-ū-ī'ah. A notable woman, mother of the three heroes, leaders of David's army: Abishai, Joab, Asahel, who are known in Scripture as the "sons of Zeruiah" (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 9).

Ziba, zī'ba. A servant of the house of Saul (Aug. 2—II. Sam. ix. 2).

Zidon, zī'dŏn, sidon. A city of Phœnicia, ancient and wealthy, of great renown for its splendid workmen (Dec. 6—I. Kings xi. 5).

Zidonians, zidonians. The people of Zidon who worshiped the goddess Ashtoreth. Solomon "loved many strange women," among them Zidonians, who turned away his heart after other gods (Dec. 6—I. Kings xi. 5).

Zion, zī'ŏn, *dry, sunny mount.* The citadel of Jerusalem, the "upper city." This height was held by the Jebusites until the reign of David, who took it by storm. Then David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. Zion was the highest point within the city limits. David's house was there, and the houses for the ark of God (July 12—II. Sam. v. 7).

Zobah, zō'ba. A small principality of Aram or Syria (Aug. 9—II. Sam. x. 8).

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

1. **Singing** (*Chopin*).

Within thy house, O Lord our God,
In glory now appear;
Make this a place of thine abode,
And shed thy blessings here.

Here let the voice of sacred joy
And humble prayer arise,
Till higher strains our tongues employ
In realms beyond the skies.

2. **Responsive Reading** (*Psalm xix. 7–14*).

SUP'T.—The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:
SCHOOL.—The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
SUP'T.—The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
SCHOOL.—The command of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
SUP'T.—The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever:
SCHOOL.—The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
SUP'T.—Who can understand his errors?
SCHOOL.—Cleanse thou me from secret faults.
ALL.—Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

3. **Song** (*selected*).

4. **Prayer.**

5. **Responsive Reading of the Lesson.**

6. **Song** (*selected*).

7. **Record of Class Attendance, and Collection.**

8. **Class Recitation.**

9. **Secretary's Report, and Announcements.**

10. **Brief Review** (*by Superintendent, or some other*).

11. **Recitation of Golden Text, and Responsive Reading.**

SUP'T.—Blessed are the poor in spirit:
SCHOOL.—For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
SUP'T.—Blessed are they that mourn:
SCHOOL.—For they shall be comforted.
SUP'T.—Blessed are the meek:
SCHOOL.—For they shall inherit the earth.
SUP'T.—Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness:
SCHOOL.—For they shall be filled.
SUP'T.—Blessed are the merciful:
SCHOOL.—For they shall obtain mercy.
SUP'T.—Blessed are the pure in heart:
SCHOOL.—For they shall see God.

12. **Closing Song.**

Take my heart, O Father, mold it
In obedience to thy will;
And as ripening years unfold it,
Keep it true and childlike still.

Father, keep it pure and lowly,
Strong and brave, yet free from strife,
Turning from the paths unholy
Of a vain or sinful life.

No order of exercises can be adapted to all times and places. The chief value of any order lies in its suggestiveness.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

1. **Song** (*Book of Life*).

Book of grace, and book of glory!
Gift of God to age and youth;
Wondrous is thy sacred story,
Bright, bright with truth.

Book of love! in accents tender
Speaking unto such as we;
May it lead us, Lord, to render
All, all to thee.

2. **Responsive Reading.**

SUP'T.—My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:

SCHOOL.—I will sing, yea, I will sing praises.

SUP'T.—I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the peoples:

SCHOOL.—I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

SUPT.—For thy mercy is great unto the heavens:

SCHOOL.—And thy truth unto the skies.

SUP'T.—Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens:

SCHOOL.—Let thy glory be above all the earth.

3. **Song** (*selected*).

4. **Responsive Reading of the Lesson.**

5. **Prayer.**

6. **Song** (*selected*).

7. Lesson Preliminaries (*Collection, etc.*).

8. **Lesson Recitation.**

9. **Song** (*selected*).

10. **Report of Secretary. Announcements.**

11. Brief General Review of the Lesson.

12. Song (*Love Divine; or, Olivet, Where'er Thou Goest, or, Hiding in Thee, may be chosen*).

Breathe, O breathe thy loving spirit
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find thy promised rest.

Take away the love of sinning,
Take our load of guilt away;
End the work of thy beginning—
Bring us to eternal day.

13. **Responsive Dismissal.**

SUP'T.—The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.

ALL.—The Lord make his face to shine upon us, and give us peace. Amen.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

1. Song (*Azmon*).

When in the earthly courts we view
The beauties of our King,
We long to love as angels do,
And wish like them to sing.

And shall we long and wish in vain?
Lord, teach our songs to rise!
Thy love can animate our strain,
And bid it reach the skies.

2. Lord's Prayer in Concert.

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowedbe thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
In earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.—
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom.
And the power, and the glory,
Forever. Amen.

Or, Responsive Reading.

SUP'T.—Happy is the man that findeth wisdom:
SCHOOL.—And the man that getteth understanding.
SUP'T.—Her ways are ways of pleasantness:
SCHOOL.—And all her paths are peace.
SUP'T.—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:
SCHOOL.—And the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.

3. Selected Song.

4. Prayer.

5. Reading of the Lesson.

6. Selected Song.

7. Lesson Preliminaries.

8. Recitation of Lesson.

9. Review of Lesson.

10. Selected Song.

11. Secretary's Report, and Announcements.

12. Closing Song (*8s & 7s*).

Hail, thou God of grace and glory,
Who thy name hast magnified
By redemption's wondrous story,
By the Saviour crucified.

Thanks to thee for every blessing
Flowing from the fount of love;
Thanks for present good, unceasing,
And for hopes of bliss above.

13. Closing Response.

SUPT.—May we work that which is well-pleasing in the sight of God our Father:
SCHOOL.—And stand before him at last with exceeding joy. Amen.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

1. **Song** (*Guide*).

To thy temple we repair;
Lord, we love to worship there,
When within the vail we meet
Thee upon the mercy seat.

From thy house when we return,
Let our hearts within us burn,
That at evening we may say:
"We have walked with God to-day."

2. **Responsive Reading** (*Rom. xii. 9*).

SUP'T.—Let love be without dissimulation:
SCHOOL.—Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.
SUP'T.—Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love:
SCHOOL.—In honor preferring one another.
SUP'T.—Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.
SCHOOL.—Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer.
SUP'T. — Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.
SCHOOL.—Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
TEACHERS. — Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

3. **Song** (*selected*).

4. **Prayer.**

5. **Reading of the Lesson.**

6. **Song** (*selected*).

7. **Lesson Preliminaries.**

8. **Recitation of the Lesson.**

9. **Song** (*selected*).

10. **Secretary's Report.**

11. **Brief Review of Lesson.**

12. **Closing Song** (*Ives*).

Thine forever, God of love,
Hear us from thy throne above,
Thine forever may we be,
Here, and in eternity.

Thine forever; Lord of life,
Shield us through our earthly strife;
Thou, the Life, the Truth, the Way,
Guide us to the realms of day.

13. **Responsive Dismissal** (*Jude 24, 25*).

SUP'T.—Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy:

ALL.—To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

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STANDARD BIBLE LESSONS.

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PREPARED BY E. B. WAKEFIELD.
GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES BY J. W. McGARVEY.

Jan., Feb., March, 1896.

FIRST QUARTER.—LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF OUR LORD.

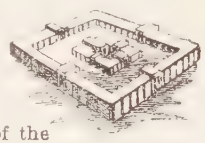
LESSON I. JANUARY 5.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.
—Luke i. 67

THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST.

Luke i. 5-17.

Time.—Autumn, B. C. 6. **Place.**—Temple at Jerusalem.



THE TEMPLE.

Geographical Notes.—Judæa, in the time of Herod mentioned in this lesson, included much more territory than under the later rulers. Under this first Herod it included all of the country anciently occupied by the twelve tribes; but at his death he left a will dividing it into four parts, and Judæa was only one of these parts, corresponding to what is called the kingdom of Judah in the Old Testament. A brief description of the country as thus divided is given in Luke iii. 1.

Contemporary History.—Rome, under the rule of Augustus Cæsar, is mistress of the world. Greek learning, and Roman law, have pervaded the civilized earth. It is a time of peace, and yet a time of great mental unrest; men have nearly reached their bounds in the search after truth, and abiding satisfaction, apart from God.

Luke.—And Luke, who was a native of Antioch, and by profession a physician, for the most part a companion of Paul, and who was not slightly acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us two books divinely inspired, proofs of the art of *healing souls*, which he won from them (*Eusebius*, A. D. 315). The first glimpse we have of Luke is in the "we" of Acts xvi. 10. This was in A. D. 53. During the latter years of Paul's life, Luke seems to have been his unfailing companion. "Only Luke is with me," wrote the Apostle in II. Tim. iv. 11. After Paul's death, we hear nothing more of Luke. He is reputed to have died in Greece.

The Book.—This gospel was certainly written before the Book of Acts (Acts i. 1); the exact date can not be fixed, but it lies between A. D. 58, and A. D. 67. The place of writing can not now be told. Jerome (A. D. 360) regards it as written in Greece; others think it written in Cæsarea, or Rome, during Paul's imprisonment. The gospel is remarkable for its account of the infancy of John and Jesus, and for the large number of Christ's parables which it contains.

5 There was in the days of Hĕr'od, the king of Ju-dæ'a, a certain priest named Zăch-a-rī'as, of the course of A-bī'a: A-bī'jah: and his wife was he had a of the daughters of Aâr'on, and her name was was E-lĭs'a-bĕth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Dec. 30.—The Forerunner of Christ (Luke i. 1-17).
Tuesday, Dec. 31.—Elizabeth and Mary (Luke i. 18-30).
Wednesday, Jan. 1.—The Song of Mary (Luke i. 46-56).
Thursday, Jan. 2.—The Birth of John (Luke i. 57-66).
Friday, Jan. 3.—The Song of Zacharias (Luke i. 67-80).
Saturday, Jan. 4.—"The Lord Heard Me" (Ps. xxxiv. 1-15).
Sunday, Jan. 5.—"In Thy Light Shall We See Light" (Ps. xxxvi. 1-10).

7 And they had no child, because that E-lĭs'a-bĕth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

I. A MAN WHO PRAYED.

EXPLANATORY.

5. There was in the days of Herod.—This was Herod the Great; an Idumean by birth, a Jew in religion, an adept in winning favors from the Roman rulers, and withal a bloodthirsty despot. For thirty-five years he has ruled Judæa. He has rebuilt the temple in great magnificence, but only two years of wretched life remain to him. He died at Jericho, after great suffering, B. C. 4. **A certain priest named Zacharias.**—More usually written by the Hebrews "*Zechariah*," meaning "Remembered of Jehovah." **Of the course of Abijah.**—From Eleazar and Ithamar, the two surviving sons of the first high priest Aaron, had descended twenty-four families. Among these King David distributed by lot the various tabernacle (afterwards temple) services, each family group, or course, officiating for eight days, from Sabbath to Sabbath. From the Babylonish exile, only four of these families returned; but with the idea of reproducing as nearly as possible the old state of things, they were subdivided into twenty-four, bearing the original family names; and this succession of courses continued in force until the fall of Jerusalem, and the burning of the temple, A. D. 70 (*Pulpit Commentary*). **A wife of the daughters of Aaron.**—The priests were not compelled to marry within their tribe, that of Levi; but Zacharias had married a wife of priestly descent, and her rank was as high as his own. **Her name was Elisabeth.**—Identical with the name of Aaron's wife, *Elishĕba*, "One whose oath is to God"—*i. e.*, One who worships God.

6, 7.—They were both righteous.—To the praise of the Jews it must be said that they always placed moral rectitude—good character—to the forefront, in their estimate of men. "The true Jashar (upright man) was the ideal Jew." **Walking in all the commandments and ordinances.**—The first may refer to the moral, and the latter to the positive, or ceremonial precepts of the law. To be approved of God, and respected and esteemed of men,—both are essential to our full comfort and peace; if we can choose but one, it must be God's approval, for then the other will some time follow. **And they had no child.**—How deep the regret for the childless home among the Jews, we can hardly understand. To have no line of descent in genealogy, and thus to have one's name perish; to have no hope of sharing in the ancestry of the Great Deliverer who was to come,—this was sore denial and grief to the Jew. Alas for the home that does not love childhood! Dr. Arnold used to say that no one could continue long in a healthy religious state, unless his heart was kept tender by mingling with children, or by frequent intercourse with the poor and suffering. Men who give themselves wholly over to business or intellectual pursuits, often have an abnormal and diseased development, which men account greatness.

8, 9. While he executed the priest's office.—There were well ordered sacrifices and services in the temple, indicating that God was present to see and to accept. And so he was, and is; and blessed are they who go where God has appointed service; for he is ever there. **His lot was to enter into the temple.**—The whole number of priests at this time is said to have exceeded twenty thousand, and only a small number of these could ever hope to obtain the office of burning incense, and hence of entering the holy place. It was a most coveted privilege. The work of each priest was determined by lot at the beginning of each week. **And burn incense.**—Incense was a compound of fragrant spices (Ex. xxx. 34 38), and its fragrant burning was a symbol of prayer. The golden altar of incense stood within the holy place of the temple,

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time hour of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zăch-a-rī'as saw *him*, he was troubled, was troubled when he saw *him*, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zăch-a-rī'as: for because thy prayer supplication is heard; and thy wife E-lĭs'a-bĕth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Jŏhn.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

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the golden candlestick and the table of shew-bread being in the same apartment. The great altar upon which sacrifices were offered, stood in front of the temple building in the open court.

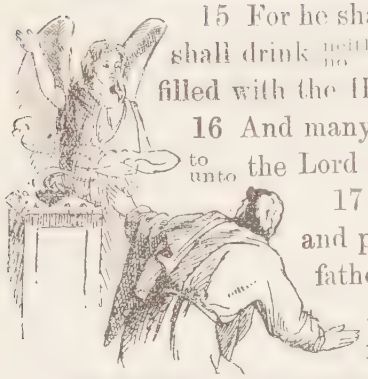
10. The whole multitude of the people were praying without.—During the burning of incense each morning and evening, the worshipers in the outer courts would stand silent, breathing prayers which they trusted might ascend with the fragrant smoke of the incense. Beautiful is sincere and intelligent devotion! The true life (1) *Worships*, privately, in family, and in the public congregation. "The soul is sick that can not freely pray." (2) *Orders life daily* in ways of industry and integrity, in sobriety and purity.

II. A PRAYER ANSWERED.

11. There appeared unto him an angel.—Here is the first angelic appearance connected with the coming of Christ. Critics have complained that the marvelous is here needlessly introduced. But since there are angels, why should they not appear? And is not the silence of the spiritual world more wonderful than its speech would be? "The narrative of an angelic visitation does not *bring* us into a supernatural region. We are in one already. The temple worship meant nothing if there were not an actual established intercourse between the visible and the invisible world" (*Maurice*). Origen (A. D. 200) wrote: "In a church there are two assemblies—one of angels, the other of men; angels are present at our prayers, and they pray with us and for us." We are persistently unmindful of the veritable presence of a vast and majestic spiritual life. **And Zacharias was troubled.**—The surprise, the feeling of amazement and awe, was painful. And associations with the life beyond which we sometimes long for, would, if freely granted, doubtless shock and trouble us here.

13, 14. Fear not . . . thy supplication is heard.—What was the the nature of this prayer? The righteous old man had not, as some have thought, been praying for a son; he had long resigned himself in this private sorrow to the will of God; but we may well suppose that on that solemn occasion he prayed the unselfish and patriotic prayer that the long-looked-for Messiah would hasten his coming (*P. C.*). God answers his heart's desire, and his nobler prayer, in one. A son shall be born, a fact strangely significant in itself. **Thou shalt call his name John.**—The same as *Jonah*, and signifying "Jehovah is gracious." **And thou shalt have joy and gladness.**—And not only should he rejoice, but also a great multitude who would hear *his* voice.

15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord.—A person of great riches and reputation is great in the sight of men; but the man of great usefulness, integrity, and serviceableness, is truly great in the sight of the Lord (*Burkitt*). We are what we are in God's sight, not what men think us, not what we think ourselves, but what he sees



15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink neither no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.
16 And many of the children of Is'ra-el shall he turn to unto the Lord their God.
17 And he shall go before him his face in the spirit and power of E-li'as, E-li'jah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.
for the Lord a people prepared for him.

and knows that we are, nothing more, nothing less (*Dean Church*). John's character is here well foretold: 1. He was morally great. He was great by God's measure. 2. He mastered himself. **He shall drink no wine.**—He was a Nazarite, one who set to a world overgiven to indulgence the example of extreme abstinence. God's heroes have always been of simple tastes and strong self-control. 3. In him God dwelt. **He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.**—"Ghost" is an ancient name for "Spirit." Its signification has so changed, that the word *Spirit* conveys the clearer and more correct idea. 4. He turned men to God. **Many of the children of Israel shall he turn.**—The overmastering Roman power had introduced into Syria and Palestine the vices and profligate life of Italy and Greece. The leaders of the people were deeply corrupted, and the oppressed peasantry too readily followed after them. But one brave man from the desert aroused the conscience of the nation, and turned many toward righteousness.

17. He shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah.—From the prophecy of Malachi (iv. 5, 6), the Jews believed, as they still do, that the old prophet Elijah would return, and herald the coming of the world's final King. **To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.**—(1) Either literally, to produce domestic concord,—the disruption of families, the divisions into sects and parties, being one of the most common signs of the decay of religion in the community, and the beginning of moral chaos; or (2) figuratively, to turn the hearts of the fathers, the Israelites, to the Gentiles, the children,—apostate and outcast, but still children. This interpretation seems to agree with such passages as Isaiah lxiii. 16, in which the Gentiles are treated as children, whom Israel, however, did not recognize; and John in his actual ministry preached to the Roman soldiers and the publicans, as well as the orthodox Jews (*L. Abbott*). **To make ready for the Lord a people.**—It is blessed to be ready for any important event when it comes. The farmer does well to be ready for the rains or the frosts. He who is ready for life's opportunities will find true fortune.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Priest. 5-7. Who was Zacharias? When did he live? Who was his wife? What is said of the characters of these persons? What is said of their age, and why is it specially spoken of? **2. The Angel.** 8-12. What were the priest's duties, and how long did they continue at one time? What was Zacharias assigned by lot to do? What did this service typify? What were the multitude doing at this hour? Who appeared to Zacharias, and what was the effect? **3. The Son.** 13-17. What did the angel bid Zacharias not to do? Why? How would the birth affect the parents and many others? What was promised as to the character of the son? What as to his mission?

COLLECT.

O God, our Father, we do thank thee that in all ages a way has been opened up to thee, and that there have been those who sought thee and found thee. May we be of those who love the service of thy house, and every thought of thee. And may the coming of the angel, of the herald, and of the king, never be in vain to us; but may we accept the offers of thy love and grace with gratitude, for evermore. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

1. THEOPHILUS.—Luke addressed his gospel to a friend whom he highly esteemed, but of whom we only know the name, Theophilus, *Lover of God*. "To thee, O lover of God, O soul teachable, humble, desirous to find in Jesus the way to the Father; to thee, O hungerer and thirster after righteousness, seeking with pure heart God's gift of living water; to thee, O man, O woman, who knowest thyself to be the sinner who needs salvation, and wouldst see the Saviour who receives sinners and transforms them,—to thee this declaration of the gospel of the grace of God is sent."

2. "UNANSWERED PRAYERS."—A poor man in Redeemed Land mourned over his poverty, and was taken at length to see his Lord's treasure houses. There he found a room called the Missed Blessings Office, full of blessings marked for him, which his weak faith would not expect, and his door had been closed when they were brought. He saw another storehouse, called the Delayed Blessings Office, full of good things for which the receivers were not prepared, or which were not fully ripened for their best use. They were growing, and would be sent in fulness of time (*Expectation Corner*, quoted in *Pel.*).

3. REALITY OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.—To me the spirit world is more than dream or vision. It is not peopled with ghosts and specters, shadows and outlines of beings, but with persons and forms palpable to the apprehension. Heaven, in all the mode and manner of expression, will abound with personality. Groups will be there, and circles; faces known and unknown will pass us; acquaintance will thrive on intercourse, and love deepen with knowledge; and the great laws of mind and heart prevail as they do here, save in this, that sin, and all the repellance and antagonisms that it breeds, will be unknown (*Murray*).

4. Zacharias gives a good example of a *faithful old age*. His fondest hopes had been disappointed. His name had no part in Israel's future history; and he was last of a priestly line,

"No son of his succeeding."

Yet he was faithful to all his sacred duties, and prayed more prevailingly than ever before, perhaps because he had learned to forego his desires, and say with the poet,

"Our wills are ours *to make them thine*."

5. The place, the messenger, the message—how striking they all were! The word of revelation naturally shows us many times the angel. Two have names revealed—Gabriel, the angel of good news, and Michael, the warrior of God. The Jews have a saying that Gabriel flies with two wings, but Michael with only one; so God sends angels of peace and joy swiftly, but his angels of judgment come slowly, that perhaps in the delay men may repent. The herald of the great King is soon to come. He goes before in desert and in dungeon; but he truly tells the coming of his Lord.

GOD'S GIFTS COME THROUGH MESSENGERS COME TO THE RIGHTEOUS THE DUTIFUL THE PRAYERFUL

HELPFUL LITERATURE.

Dr. Smith's and Maclear's "New Testament Histories"; Geikie's and Edersheim's "Lives of Christ"; Abbott's, Barnes', Cambridge, Godet's, Rice's, and Bible and Pulpit Commentaries on "Luke," are fair helps. Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations," and especially the "Biblical Illustrator," Luke, Vol. I. (Randolph & Co., New York, $2), are full of suggestions.

MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.—Luke ii. 52.

LESSON II. JANUARY 12.

THE BOY JESUS.

Luke ii. 40-52.

Time.—This passover was during the first week of April, A. D. 9. **Place.**—Nazareth, and the temple at Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—The journey taken by Jesus and his parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem and back, would have been a comparatively short one if they had gone by the most direct route. This would have led them through the land of the Samaritans, and would have been only about seventy miles; but the Samaritans were very hostile to Galileans passing through their country on the way to Jerusalem to worship (see Luke ix. 51-53), and this caused the Jews usually to cross the Jordan a short distance below the lake of Galilee, pass down the eastern bank of that river till they got opposite Jericho, when they recrossed, and passing through Jericho, went on up to Jerusalem. The distance by this route was over one hundred miles. The last stage of it, from Jericho to Jerusalem, was a very steep climb of more than three thousand feet; and it led the people to speak of the whole journey as going *up* to Jerusalem, while the return was called going *down* (verses 42, 51). The one day's journey made by the parents before missing Jesus and turning back, was down toward Jericho.

Intervening History.—Following the birth of John, came soon the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem;

> When a glory all hidden to men's careless eyes,
> Broke forth on the angels, and brightened the skies,

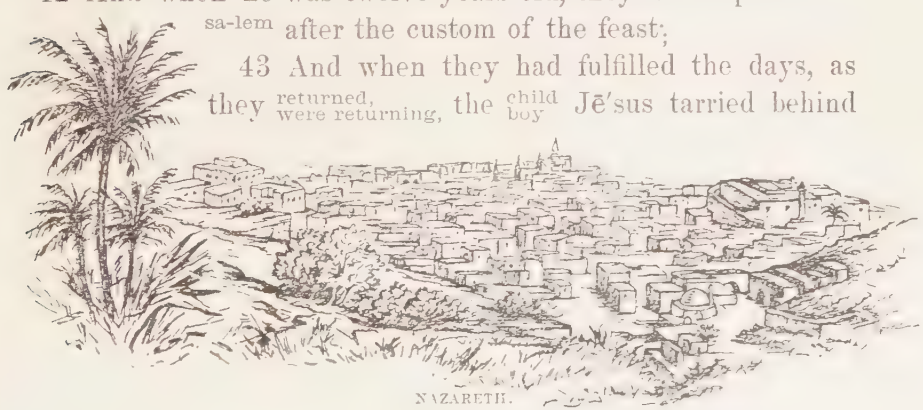
Then came the flight into Egypt, where "the fairest oasis of earth grew fairer, since it gave him sweet repose." And after this, Nazareth, amid whose simple scenes the infant, whose very existence proved how nearly and how perfectly God was related to man, grew into ruddy and wholesome boyhood.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

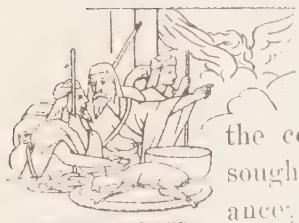
41 Now And his parents went [illegible] at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Je-ru'-sa-lem after the custom of the feast;

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, were returning, the child boy Jē'sus tarried behind



NAZARETH.



PASCHAL SUPPER.

in Je-ru'sa-lĕm; and Jo'seph and his mother / his parents knew not of it / it not;

44 But they, supposing him to have been / be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their / their kinsfolk and acquaintance;

I. GOING TO JERUSALEM.

EXPLANATORY.

40. And the child grew.—The Son of God came entirely into human conditions that he might show what beauty and majesty were possible in human development. He *grew*, in body; he *waxed strong* in all that goes to make up character, especially did he increase in wisdom; and the divine favor was upon him.

THE TRAINING OF JESUS.—Well may we study the growth of this life; a model growth it is, and nothing about it seems unnatural or impossible. 1. There was the school of *home*,—the "sweet environment" of the humble dwelling in Nazareth. We are trained for the celestial home in the school of the terrestrial. The true and well-ordered home holds in itself gifts which no other institution of earth can offer. 2. There was the school of *toil*. There is no reason for supposing that Joseph and Mary were especially poor, and therefore that Jesus was brought up in absolute poverty. They were steady workers, and *he* was brought up in practical sympathy with what must ever be the great preponderating class of humanity, the working class. 3. There was the school of *society*. His was no desert education, nor did he live with artificial men and women in fashionable courts; but side by side, with simple and yet genuine human hearts, he grew. 4. There was the school of *isolation*. He lived in the world, yet the world comprehended him not. Even his own brethren did not understand him. And ever the foundations of character are laid in moral solitude. Man's mightiest decisions and grandest victories are, and ever must be, gained single handed. 5. There was the school of the *synagogue*. Every day in the week, and three times every Saturday, or the Jewish Sabbath, Jesus went to the synagogue, where he saw a model of the ark of the covenant, and scrolls of the sacred books, and joined in the prescribed prayers, and listened to the readings of the two lessons—the one from the law, and the other from the prophets. 6. There was the school of *routine*. Doubtless it was the same unbroken, monotonous routine of family and workshop and synagogue, week after week, year after year. 7. There was the school of *delay*. During those long thirty years Jesus doubtless often yearned to enter at once upon his glorious mission. Not that enterprise and courage and energy are not praiseworthy. They are most noble traits. But there is such a thing as prematurity, and prematurity is apt to mean failure. The lesson of patience is especially needed in our times and land.

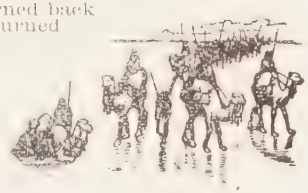
CARPENTER SHOP IN NAZARETH.

41. His parents went every year to Jerusalem.—The feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, called the

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Jan. 6. The Birth of Christ (Luke ii. 1-14).
Tuesday, Jan. 7.—Visit of the Shepherds (Luke ii. 15-24).
Wednesday, Jan. 8.—Simeon and Anna (Luke ii. 25-39).
Thursday, Jan. 9.—The Boy Jesus (Luke ii. 40-52).
Friday, Jan. 10.—A Journey in Infancy (Matt. ii. 1-15).
Saturday, Jan. 11. The Lord Giveth Wisdom (Prov. ii. 1-12).
Sunday, Jan. 12.—A King Who Shall Come (Ps. lxxii. 1-19).

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Je-ru'sa-lĕm, seeking for him.



CARAVAN.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

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adult males of Israel to Jerusalem three times each year. Devout women also attended freely as they were able.

42. When he was twelve years old.—In the simple life of the east a boy at twelve is much more mature than in the west. The age of twelve was a marked period in the life of the Jewish boy. He now became a "son of the law," and began to incur for himself legal obligations. Also, by rule, at this date the boy began the learning of his appointed trade. **They went up after the custom.**—A considerable company would go together. This was a day when railroads and newspapers did not exist to work interchange of life and thought, and unify a people. The great feasts at Jerusalem were the one means of keeping the people acquainted and in touch with each other socially and religiously. Such gatherings may still have a power too little appreciated.

II. TARRYING IN THE TEMPLE.

43. When they had fulfilled the days.—The festival lasted seven days, and during this time we may suppose that the boy was left much to himself. It was probably his first visit since infancy to the glorious house. Slowly, surely had he been growing up into the consciousness of *what* he was, and *whence* he came! **The boy Jesus tarried behind.**—Absorbed in the service of the temple, and the teachings of the doctors, he did not notice the departure of his home company.

44, 45. Supposing him to be in the home company they went a day's journey.—A day's journey in the east is about twenty miles. The first stopping place going north, according to tradition, was Beerothel-Bireh, but this is less than ten miles out. The vast moving masses of worshipers must have made travel slow near Jerusalem. The long lines moving along narrow paths forbade search for friends until camp was made at evening time. **When they found him not they returned to Jerusalem.**—Josephus says that at this time the passover was attended by three millions of pilgrims, and in such a throng there must ever have been danger.

46, 47. After three days they found him.—One day they journeyed homeward, on the second day they returned, on the third (according to common Hebrew expression) they found him. In the temple were extensive courts, or chambers, where learned doctors gathered and taught. Perhaps the aged and famous Hillel was here, and a youthful Gamaliel and Nicodemus. It was no mark of forwardness that Jesus sat at the feet of these teachers, listening and asking questions: all this was allowed and desired. Nor are we to suppose that he displayed any superhuman wisdom. Dr. Trumbull remarks, that when Jesus went up to the house of God he took pains to have a share in Bible study. Yet to-day there are men and women who are regularly at the preaching services, but never at the Sunday-school.

48. When they saw him, they were astonished.—To see their son sitting so familiarly among the profoundly honored doctors of the law must have been something of gratification as well as of painful surprise. Mary is perplexed that *he* should have caused her such anxious sorrow. Ah, Mary! Thou hast borne and nurtured one whose

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about (in) my Father's business? (house?)

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Năz'a-rĕth; and he was subject unto them: but (and) his mother kept all these (these) sayings in her heart.

52 And Jē'sus increased (advanced) in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (men.)

life so far transcends thine own thou canst not understand him! So, often, have humble souls had the joy and grief of beginning a work that rose beyond them.

49. How is it that ye sought me?—The emphasis is on *sought*. "Did you not know where to find me?" Mary has expressed surprise that he should have missed the Nazareth caravan. The boy expresses surprise that Joseph and Mary had not known where his instincts would have led and detained him (*Buell*). **Know ye not that I must be in my Father's house?**—In the Greek, this expression is elliptical: the noun for "business" or "house" not being expressed. The idea of *seeking* suggests *house;* but the sense does not vary greatly in any case. "Where my Father's special service goes on, there must you always look for me." Jesus here uses the word "must." He never debates a plain question of duty. And this is the first recorded utterance of Jesus. It strikes the key-note of his life. There was nothing disrespectful, or rebellious, in the reply. His parents did not understand his words, but they had as yet no special need to understand; for through long years the home at Nazareth was to be to him a "Father's house"; at least there lay for many years the work his Father had appointed him to do.

III. ABIDING IN NAZARETH.

51. He went down with them, and came to Nazareth.—Here we leave the life of Jesus for eighteen silent years. We may gather a few lessons. 1. Jesus abode continuously at Nazareth, a place of seclusion, and yet peaceful beauty. 2. He was a dutiful and helpful child to his parents, 3. It seems that Joseph died not long after this time, at least we have no further reference to him; and Jesus seems to have followed at his trade. His townsmen speak of him as "the carpenter's son," and "the carpenter" (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3); and Justin Martyr, who lived in the century after Christ, records the tradition that he worked at the carpenter's trade 4. Through all he developed his life in full and beautiful proportion; he was beautiful in body, correct and vigorous, and well informed in mind, and pure and indomitably upright in heart. Mary keeps her secret in her heart. Far enough is she from comprehending him; but best of all the world she understands the mystery and mission of the boy.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Lost from a Father's House. 40-45. What is said of the growth of Jesus? Where was his home? When and why did his parents go to Jerusalem? When did Jesus go? What feast was this? How long did it last? How did Jesus become separated from his company? What did his parents do? **2. Found in His Father's House.** 46 52. Where did his parents find Jesus? Was he "out of place" here? What did Mary think her son should have done? What did Jesus seem to think his parents should have done? Where did Jesus go after this passage in his history? How long did he stay there? What did he do? Of what special value to the world was this life at Nazareth?

COLLECT.

O God, may all the years and experiences of life make us to grow in knowledge; and may the deep consciousness dawn upon us that thou art especially our Father; and that we, though sinful and lost, are still thy children. May we love thy house: and to the truth revealed from heaven may we give our first, best thoughts, that we may be ready for the sweet revealments of a world before us: in Christ we ask. Amen.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

1. THE PLACE OF GROWTH.—We need not go from our proper place in order to discipline ourselves for God's service; we need not strive after gifts which he has not entrusted to us, or mourn for places out of reach. The peasant home of Nazareth, if it be put in communion with God, has wondrous possibilities. . . We are apt to look upon seasons of sharp trial, or sorrow, as especial seasons of growth. But when these exceptional events happen, they rather reveal to us what we have already become. Great occasions do not make heroes, or cowards; they simply unveil them to the eyes of men. Silently and imperceptibly, as we wake and sleep, we grow and wax strong, or we grow and wax weak; at last some crisis shows us what we have become (*Westcott*).

2. THE BEST LIFE IS THE CHRIST LIFE.—It is sometimes well to look the universe over, and if we can not settle on absolute truth, at least settle on what is absolutely best. How can one who really comes into the presence of Christ fail to trust him? But if one doubts, still what better can one do than follow him? Matthew Arnold speaks sober wisdom even to gloomiest skepticism:

"Christ," some one says, "was human as we are;
No judge eyes us from Heaven, our sin to scan;
We live no more, when we have done our span."
"Well, then, for Christ," thou answereth, "who can care?
From sin which Heaven records not, why forbear?
Live we like brutes our life without a plan!"

So answereth thou; but why not rather say:
"Hath man no second life? *Pitch this on high!*
Sits there no judge in Heaven our sins to see?—
More strictly, then, the inward judge obey!
Was Christ a man like us? Ah, let us try
If we then, too, can be such men as he!"

3. THE WORLD CAN NOT AFFORD TO LOSE CHRIST.—Some years ago an institution for the blind was built in one of our large towns. The committee put their wise heads together, and decided that as the building was for the blind, for those who could not see, there was no reason, and only waste of money, in going to the expense of windows. Scientific ventilation and heating were provided for, but no windows, because—as the committee logically put it—it was no use in the world providing light for those who can not see it. The blind asylum was opened, and the poor sightless patients settled into the house. But things did not go well. They began to sicken, a great languor fell upon them, and at the same time they were strangely distressed and restless. After one or two had died, and all were ill, the committee resolved to open windows. Then the sun poured in, and the white faces regained color, vital energy revived, and health and rest came back. . . Jesus is the Sun of the soul, the light of the world. He gives health to the mind, rest to the heart, and peace to the soul; and the blind and disordered earth has no rest and no relief without him (*Baring-Gould*).

4. The youth of Jesus may well be studied as a pattern for all youth.

(1) It was a childhood of quiet and seclusion. He was kept in the background and not paraded by his parents as an instance of precocious excellence, or intellect. He drank the pure breeze of heaven, and found joy in sweet draughts from nature and Divine truth; not in human adulation.

(2) He had genuine thirst for knowledge. How unlike that craving appetite for the sensational, or for mere amusement, which begins in our days so early, and has turned the literature of the young so largely into a jest, or a poison! We seek too oft the extravagant and exciting, and turn away from the real and the sobering. What Christ sought at the age of twelve years was knowledge, and he sought that knowledge in the courts of his Father's house.

(3) He was thoroughly teachable. Many to whom he listened must have been poorly prepared to instruct him, yet he honored them in their position, and received heavenly truth even from earthly vessels. Indeed, he never seemed to magnify himself, but ever to magnify the duties of the place and hour. He was a most dutiful and child-like child; a most devoted and man-like man.

THE BEST.

NOT BUT

PRAISE PUBLICITY at Jerusalem; SILENCE SUBMISSION at Nazareth

HELPFUL LITERATURE.

This lesson may be found in the Commentary for 1894, lesson for July 29. Also see Hughes' "Manliness of Christ," Boardman's "Divine Man," Edersheim's "Temple," and the chapters dealing with this passage in all the leading "Lives of Christ."

LESSON III. JANUARY 19.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Luke iii. 15-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. —John i. 29.

Time.—The baptism of Jesus was in January, A. D. 27. John had begun preaching about six months before; his imprisonment began in March, A. D. 28. **Places.**—The Wilderness and Jordan Valley.

Geographical Notes.—Many people imagine that John selected one place in the Jordan for his baptizing, and remained there. Luke corrects this mistake by saying (verse 3) that "he came in all the region round about the Jordan." I suppose that this refers to his going up and down the river, as well as to other streams of water in its vicinity, of which there were and are quite a number. It includes his visit to "Bethany beyond the Jordan" (John i. 28), and to "Ænon, near to Salem" (John iii. 23), which was on a mountain stream not many miles from Shechem. He began his work "in the wilderness" (Mark i. 4), which lies along the last eight miles of the Jordan's course, or from Jericho to its mouth. In this part, and for twenty-five miles higher up, the river is about one hundred and thirty feet wide on the average, and in the summer time about ten feet deep in the channel. In the latter part of the dry season, when it is at its lowest stage, it is fordable in many places at the head of shoals. At all the fords the approaches to the water are gradual, the bottom is rock, and the conveniences for baptizing are such as are usually found in rivers of similar size in our own country.

ANCIENT SHOES AND SANDALS.

Intervening History.—Seventeen years have passed since the events of the last lesson. John has been growing up in the solitude of the wilderness in the south of Palestine. Jesus has kept in his home in the fair hills of the north, except as occasional feasts may have taken him to Jerusalem. For fourteen years Tiberius has been emperor of Rome, and Pontius Pilate has just been appointed procurator of Judæa.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men (mused, reasoned) in their hearts (of, concerning) Jŏhn, whether (haply) he were the Chrīst; (or not;)

16 Jŏhn answered, saying unto (them, them) all, I indeed baptize you with water; but (one mightier, there cometh) than I cometh, he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose

I. THE VOICE FROM THE WILDERNESS.

EXPLANATORY.

15. As the people were in expectation.—Here is a high tribute to the character and work of John the Baptist. He urges with such lofty zeal the preparation of a way for Christ that men begin to ask whether he is not himself the Christ.

16. I indeed baptize you with water.—*En hudati*, in water, as the American revisers translate it. "I baptize you

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Jan. 13.—The Ministry of John the Baptist (Luke iii. 15-22).

Tuesday, Jan. 14.—The Forerunner Foretold (Mal. iii. 1-12).

Wednesday, Jan. 15. — The Preaching of John (Luke iii. 1-14).

Thursday, Jan. 16.—John's Testimony to Jesus (John i. 19-34).

Friday, Jan. 17.—"Behold the Lamb of God" John i. 35-42).

Saturday, Jan. 18.—The Martyrdom of John the Baptist (Mark vi. 14-29).

Sunday, Jan. 19.—The Lesson in Matthew (Matt. iii. 1-17).

shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Hō'ly Ghōst and with *with* fire:

17 Whose fan *is* is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, to cleanse his threshing-floor, and will to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with fire unquenchable, unquenchable fire.

18 And With many other things in his exhortation exhortations therefore preached he good tidings unto the people:

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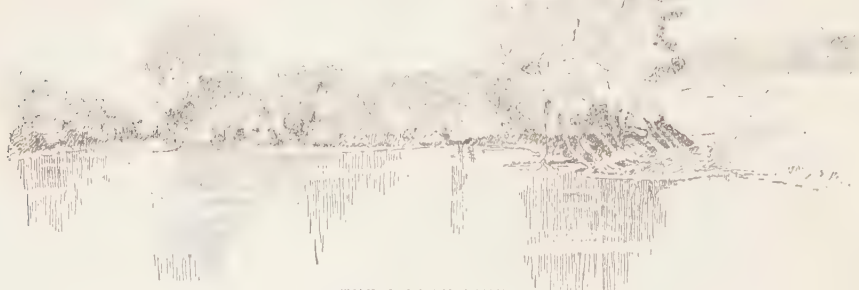
with water; but when the Christ comes he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, if you truly repent, giving you through him a part in the new kingdom of God; or with the fire of Gehenna if you refuse him. What a division indeed will he make! For he will be like the winnower in the open air threshing-floor, casting up the mass against the wind to separate the chaff from the wheat, and gathering the one into his garner, but setting fire to the other till it be utterly consumed" (*G.*). **There cometh he that is mightier than I.**—If a warning of danger were all the help that an imperiled man received, his case would be a hard one. To tell one who had fallen overboard that he was in danger of drowning, would be of questionable service to him. But if the warner of danger could say, "Do not despair, for one who can help you is quickly coming," there would be a power for life in his words. Calling a sinner to repentance is but a small part of a preacher's work. Pointing to a Saviour is quite as needful. Unless a man realizes that he is in danger, he feels no need of a helper—he cares nothing for being saved. Merely to know that he is in peril, without access to a Saviour, would bring a man to despair. So the cry of warning and the peal of hope go forth together (*T.*). **The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose.**—John does not propose to be put in comparison with his King. To loose the sandals was the work of the most menial servant, and John is not worthy to do that for the Coming One. **With the Holy Ghost and with fire.**—He will either entirely immerse you in the Holy Spirit as penitents; or, if impenitent, he will overwhelm you with the fire of judgment. Some commentators apply the expression, "with fire," to the kindling, sanctifying fire of the Holy Spirit. But the warning tone of the passage, and the expression *unquenchable fire* in verse 17, are against this interpretation (*Lange*). In like manner to the baptism of water, the baptism of the Spirit was to imply an equally entire subjugation and overmastery of the soul by the Spirit which pervaded it; an immediate and complete change and renovation. The Christian accordingly is to be "led by the Spirit," to "walk in the Spirit," to subject his entire nature to its control (*R. Richardson*). (Read also Acts i. 4, 5.)

17. Whose fan is in his hand.—The threshing-floor was a level spot of ground, beaten hard. Not far from the site of ancient Corinth, where the peasants in many of their customs approach to Oriental nations, I passed a heap of grain which some laborers were employed in winnowing; they used, for



THE JORDAN RIVER.

19 But Hĕr'od the tetrarch, being reproved by him for He-rō'-dĭ-as his brother Philip's brother's wife, and for all the evils evil things which Hĕr'od had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jē'sus also being having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

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throwing up the mingled wheat and chaff against the passing breeze, a three-pronged wooden fork, having a handle three or four feet long. Like this, no doubt, was the *fan* or *winnowing shovel* which John the Baptist represents Christ as bearing (*Hackett*).

II. THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

19. But Herod the tetrarch.—The events recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth verses, occurred more than a year after the baptism of Jesus. They are here inserted to give a complete view of John's ministry. His public work ceased at the prison door. Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, was tetrarch ("ruler of a fourth part") of Galilee and Perea from B. C. 4 to A. D. 39. He was crafty and unprincipled. Having married a daughter of Aretas, an Arabian king, he sent her away, and in her place installed Herodias, wife of his half brother Philip, whom he had enticed from her husband. **Being reproved by him.**—Though others might be silent, John would not be. He who called men vehemently to repentance, would not pass over this shameless sin in a high place.

"It is unlawful. Thou a king? Yes,
And a sinner, too! Thou must not have her."

20. Added this also . . . that he shut up John in prison.—It is written as a sin above all, that Herod should arrest the herald of the Great King. It ended in a dreadful murder. Josephus, speaking of the entire defeat of Herod's army by Aretas, says: "Some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, who was called the Baptist. For Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue; both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God; and so to come to baptism. For that the washing of water would be acceptable to him, if they make use of it, not in order to putting away or the remission of some sins only, but for the purification of the body: supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness" (*Antiq., Book XVIII. Ch. 5*).

21. When all the people were baptized.—All who were at that time present desiring baptism. With the call to repent, John united a significant rite for all who were willing to own their sins, and promise amendment of life. It was the new and striking requirement of baptism. The old rites and requirements of the Pharisees would not content him. A new symbol was needed, striking enough to express the vastness of the change he demanded, and to form its fit beginning, and simple enough to be easily applied to every individual (*G.*). **Jesus also having been baptized.**—This is the shortest account of this event in the first three Gospels. We learn in Matthew that John felt that Jesus had no need to be baptized. He had in truth "no sins to wash away," but he could set men an example of fulfilling all righteousness, and he could be inducted to a larger life.

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?—He was baptized that by his submission to the rite he might purify the water (*Ignatius, martyred A. D. 108*). He did not so much get cleansing from baptism, as impart cleansing to it (*Jerome, A. D. 400*). The first circumstance that strikes us is, His simple obedience to the Divine law. It bids you obey the Divine law, not scan it; it bids you do the will of God, not criticise it. The will of God must be done, and every command of God obeyed (*Canon Bradley*). 1. He would hereby honor the ministry of man, in that he submits so humbly to it. As he was

22 And the Hō'ly Ghōst descended in a bodily shape like form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came from out of heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

baptized, not by an angel or prince, but by an homely man who lived as an hermit; so must not we think baser of the ordinance for the lowliness of the man who administers. 2. Christ was content to wash in common water, in the flood of Jordan. He feared no infection from it, though Naaman the leper had washed there; though the Pharisees and hypocrites washed there; he takes no exception, contracts no uncleanliness. So the wicked impurity of one of the company doth not taint him who goes forth with a sincere heart. 3. Christ would be baptized, not to wash himself, but us; not to put off sin as we, but to put on our sin, so that our sin in him might be washed away; that he might sanctify this ordinance (*T. Taylor*).

And praying.—In that he was first baptized, and then prayed, he teacheth us—that we must be first cleansed and sanctified, and then pray: men must lift pure hands with pure hearts in every place (Isa. i. 15, 16). Now he would pray—from his pure passion for the glorification of the Father; from his intense longing for the salvation of the world; from his sure knowledge of the difficulties that lay before him; from his keen foresight of the sorrows that await him (*B. I.*).

22. And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form.—While he was praying, and gazing up into heaven, the deep blue vault was rent asunder, and the Sinless One gazed far into the realms of eternal light; and as he gazed he saw descend a ray of glory, which dove-like, brooded above his head, and then lighted upon him. This strange bright vision was seen not only by him, but by the Baptist (John i. 32, 33). John compared it to a dove—this cloud of glory sailing through the clear heaven, then, bird-like, sinking, brooding, resting on him. The movement would suggest the comparison; it was *like* a dove (*P. C.*). Here Jesus was anointed to the Messiahship (Acts x. 38). **And a voice came out of heaven.**—The worth of him who testifies decides the value of testimony. God had given testimony to Christ by many famous men, even all the prophets, and now lately by John the Baptist who was greater than a prophet; yea, more, had given testimony of him by a multitude of angels (Luke ii. 13). But not content with all this, he gives from heaven his own testimony of him (*Taylor*). How blessed to think that our God can *speak;* yea, *has* spoken, and that confirming the royalty of Jesus. "Here is full Divinity: the *Lord* is baptized, the *Spirit* descends in the likeness of a dove, and the voice of the *Father* is heard bearing witness to his Son."

Be not dismayed; we are not far from God,
Far from the *Highest* we may be,
But he is also *Loveliest*, and can come
In sweet descending unto such as we.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Herald of a King. 15-20. What did the people reason concerning John? How did John contrast himself with the Coming One? What contrast in baptism? What would be done on the great threshing floor? Who was this Herod? What did he do to John? Why? **2. The King who was Heralded.** 21, 22. Who came from Nazareth to John? Why was Jesus baptized? What was seen at his baptism? What was heard? What change was made in the life of Jesus at his baptism?

COLLECT.

Heavenly Father, may we approach every duty in the spirit of our Master; rejoicing over every act that more binds us unto thee; and earnestly desiring to fulfill all righteousness. If higher duties await our upward steps, may we know that sweeter joys and higher visions also await us. With humble and yet eager steps may we everywhere follow the Lord of life, and with him at last find endless life. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

1. LOOK EVER FOR THE COMING ONE.—What is the man who, having no expectations, is ever looking to the past? Almost universally a melancholy man. And what is the man who sees nothing but the present? A drudge in his work, and a sensualist in his pleasures. But what is the man who throws himself into that which is beyond him? At least an energetic man, and if he be a Christian, a happy one. Every man's character is determined by what he is *living up to*. The Mohammedan is stolid and self-indulgent; he believes in a corporeal and sensuous heaven. The Brahmin must be a man of apathy; he looks forward to the bliss of utter annihilation. The real Christian must grow holy and loving, because he is ever more and more realizing the heaven of holiness and love to which he is going (*Vaughn*).

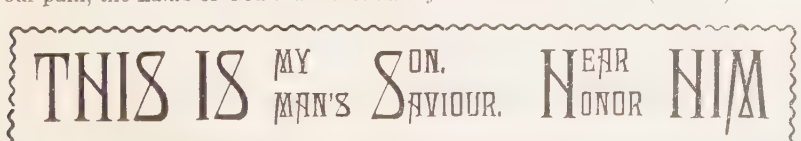
2. THE RIGHT HEART MUST LIE BACK OF EVERY SHARP CENSURE.—We may speak sharply of the vices and fashionable follies of the world, if we truly do so to better and save the world. John spake words that burned to save from a later and sadder fire. "I denounce you as a guilty debaucher, in hope of stopping your sinning, and saving your soul," said the chaplain of Charles II.

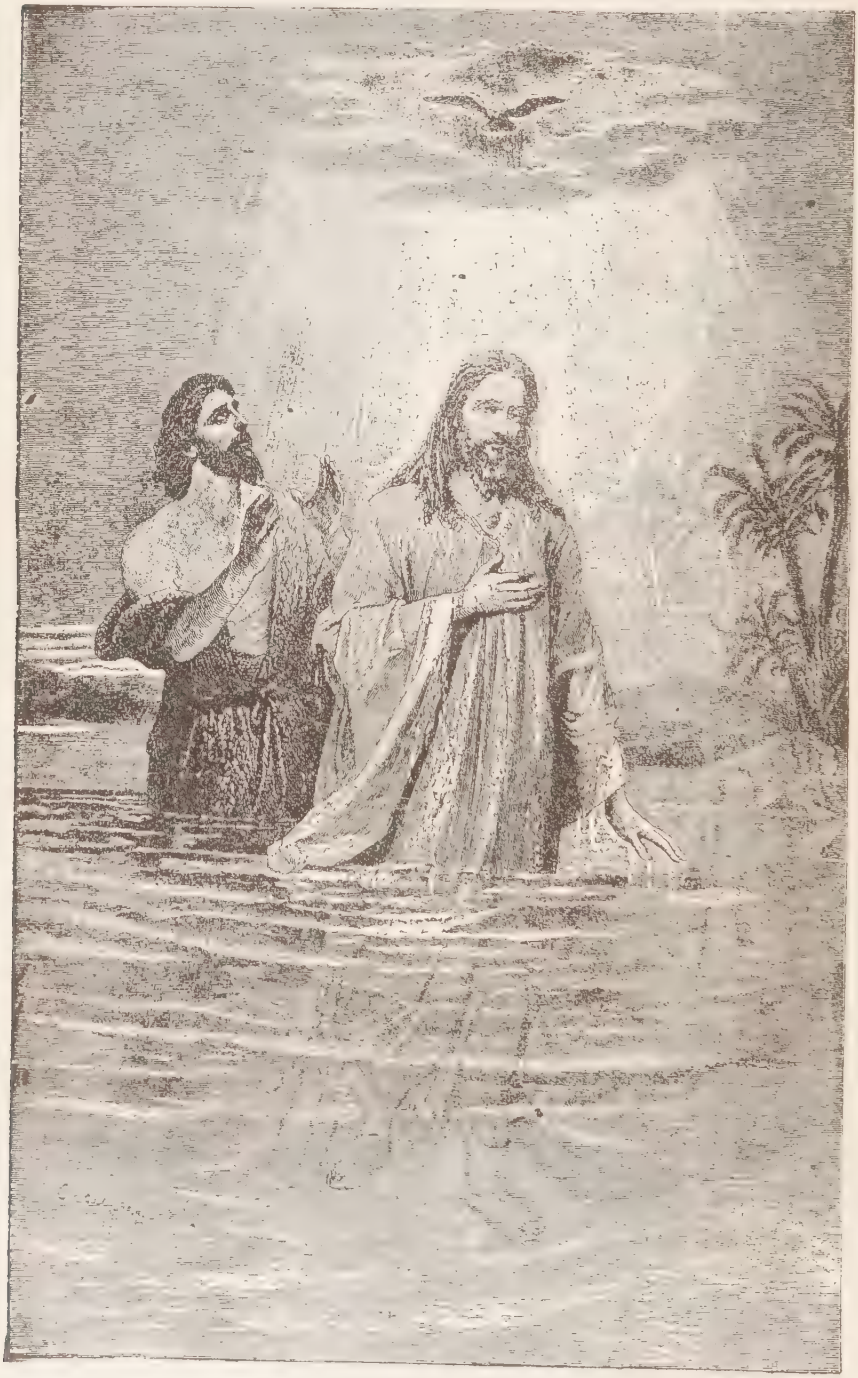
3. THE CHANGE WROUGHT IN JESUS' BAPTISM.—Can we question that such an act was a crisis in the life of our Lord? Holy and pure before sinking under the waters, he must yet have risen from them with the light of a higher glory on his countenance. His past life was closed; a new era had opened. Hitherto the humble villager, veiled from the world, he was henceforth the Messiah, openly working amongst men. It was the true moment of his entrance on a new life. Past years had been buried in the waters of Jordan. He entered them as Jesus the Son of man; he rose from them the Christ of God (*Geikie*).

4. CHRIST'S WINNOWING FAN.—Christ's call itself was the fan he bore in his hand. His summons to service would not attract, but repel, the selfish and frivolous. He offered no prospects that could tempt the worldly mind. In this way, without excluding any, Christ suffered the unworthy to exclude themselves. He kept them aloof by offering them nothing which they could find attractive. And all those who found Christ's call attractive were such as were worthy to receive it. So, more than once, have high-minded leaders separated men of heroic cast from common clay—summoning to toil, or conflict, that called for faith, and tried the soul (*Ecce Homo*).

5. CHRIST'S FIRE.—A hidden fire burns perpetually upon the hearth of the world. We see its effects in slow decay, in the rusting of iron, in the fading of leaves. Every tree is a burning bush. In autumn the great conflagration becomes especially manifest. Every blade of grass in the fields, and every leaf in the woodlands, is cast into the great oven of nature, and the bright colors of their fading are literally the flames of their consuming. By this autumn fire God, every year, purges the floor of nature. All effete substances that have served their purpose in the old form are burnt up, and only what has the promise of life and usefulness passes scathless through the ordeal. The straw and the chaff are consumed, and only the wheat remains. As in nature, so in grace. At this very time the Mosaic dispensation was fully ripe, and the chaff of effete rites and withered institutions was ready for the fire (*Macmillan*).

6. "THOU ART MY BELOVED SON."—After God had spoken, well might the Baptist say on the morrow: "Behold the Lamb of God!" Blest message to the ages! Call to every pilgrim of the night! Be of good cheer, thy help is nigh. God in Christ is your Saviour, because Christ in human nature means Christ in *you*, if you will receive him. Let this vision remain with us—blessed gleam of heaven's morning light! Behold Jesus going down into the Jordan to be baptized, one with us, never more to be separated from us! Close to us in the waters of purification, close to us in the burden and heat of the day, close to us in the shadow of our Gethsemane, close to us in the calvary of our pain, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world (*Haweis*).





BAPTISM OF JESUS.

LESSON IV. JANUARY 26.

GOLDEN TEXT.
His word was with power. —Luke iv. 32.

THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS.

Luke iv. 14-22.

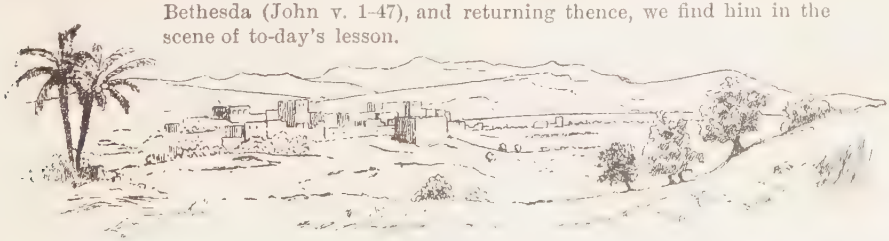
Time.—April, A. D. 28. More than a year after the events of the last lesson.

Place.—Nazareth, in Galilee, until the past year the constant home of Jesus from his infancy.

Geographical Notes.—Galilee, where Jesus is now laboring, included the territory originally given to the four most northern tribes of Israel—Issachar, Zebulon, Naphtali, and Asher. The southern part of it was the great plain of Esdraelon, while the chief part was the range of mountains extending north from that plain to the river Kasimiah. It was bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and by the Lake of Galilee and the River Jordan on the east. Nazareth lies near the southern extremity of this mountain range, only about two miles in a direct line from the plain. In order to reach it from the plain, one has to climb a precipitous bluff about one thousand feet high, by a zig-zag path cut in the rock. The ascent is so steep as to be barely practicable on horse back, and the horses must be allowed to stop and take breath several times. From the summit of this cliff there is a gradual descent till you reach the city, which comes into view on the opposite slope of a deep and narrow valley as you approach it. It is built on the slope of a mountain ridge, and extends from the foot of the same about two-thirds of the way to its summit. On the face of this slope, toward the western end of the town, there is yet a perpendicular precipice of rock, about forty feet high, which is doubtless the "brow of the hill," down which the Nazarenes, as described in the chapter, attempted to hurl Jesus, that they might kill him. Nazareth is now the most beautiful and modern-looking town in Palestine, having about seven thousand inhabitants, nearly all of the Christian faith, and containing many schools, churches, and hospitals, built and controlled by the missionary organizations of all the different sects in Europe. The money expended in erecting these buildings, and in the annual support of these establishments, enriches, comparatively, the native workmen of the place, and a general air of thrift and intelligence prevails.

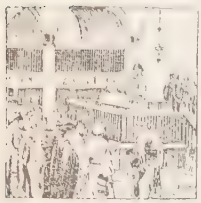
POOL OF BETHESDA.

Intervening History.—The year just past has largely been spent in Judæa. After the baptism Jesus returned to Galilee, and wrought his first miracle at Cana. Almost immediately he returned to Jerusalem to attend the first passover of his public ministry. Now he first cleansed the temple, preached to Nicodemus, and at the Jordan gathered disciples and baptized. Repelled from Judæa, he passes through Samaria, preaching to the woman at Jacob's well. After a few quiet weeks in Galilee, he visits Jerusalem to attend the second passover, when he heals the blind man at the pool of Bethesda (John v. 1-47), and returning thence, we find him in the scene of to-day's lesson.



CANA.

14 And Jē'sus returned in the power of the Spirit into Găl'ĭ-lee: and there went out a fame of went out concerning him through all the region round about.



INTERIOR OF SYNAGOGUE.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Năz'a-rĕth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

I. A RETURN TO THE OLD HOME.

EXPLANATORY.

14. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.—He came back in a majesty and power that Nazareth and Galilee never had seen before. Here comes an interesting question: Can one who is Divine receive augmented powers? To this it may be replied that Christ's life on earth was the Divine circumscribed. The power of the Spirit brought forth no new elements, but it brought out the Divine elements that before existed. And followers of Christ often pass through seasons when spiritual power is strangely increased. John Wesley looked upon the early years of his ministry as a bondage, compared with the zeal and joy of his later work.

15. And he taught in their synagogues.—What a teacher! The main element of power in one who speaks is, an entire, or the largest possible, comprehension of the subject. Here we have the key to the power with which Christ preached. He saw the meaning of the Jewish system. He pierced the whole symbolism to its center, and drew out its significance. He said that God was a deliverer from first to last, and measured the significance of the fact. The whole heart and mind of God were open to him. This was the power of Christ's preaching; he saw God; he understood God. We can not attain to Christ's power; but in proportion as we do, is our power over others (*Munger*).

16. He came to Nazareth.—Why did Jesus go to Nazareth? He was drawn to his old home; he had lived there thirty years, and his family were still there. He went there that he might personally voice the prophecy concerning himself spoken seven centuries before (Isa. lxi.). He would preach to his own people, and prove the old proverb (Luke iv. 24). It was impossible for him to work a miracle at Nazareth. The Nazarenes ridiculed his lofty claims, and challenged him to work a miracle; this precluded all possibility; for, being supremely kingly, he could not put God to a foolish test, or respond to a banter (*Nelson*). **As his custom was.**—This refers not merely to a habit of his youth, but also to a feature of his ministry. He constantly indicated his interest in the regular services of the sanctuary. To his superior intelligence and piety they were often very unsatisfactory; still he honored them by his presence and strove to make them better (*Gobin*). EXCUSES FROM CHURCH ATTENDANCE.—1. "We know more than the preacher." Christ did. But the sermon is not all. 2. "We may keep the day at home." But *do you?* 3. "The church is imperfect and inconsistent." It was in Christ's time, but that did not hinder his consistent worship. 4. "I am tired." So was Christ, and about his Father's business, too. **Into the synagogue.**—After the return from the Babylonian captivity, synagogues sprung up everywhere in Palestine; wherever there were ten Israelites there was said to be a synagogue, a plain building fronting toward Jerusalem. The room, an open space where the hearers sat, Eastern fashion, on the

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Jan. 20. The Temptation of Jesus (Luke iv. 1-13).
Tuesday, Jan. 21.—A Sabbath in Nazareth (Luke iv. 14-30).
Wednesday, Jan. 22.—At Capernaum (Luke iv. 31-44).
Thursday, Jan. 23.—Offended in him (Matt. xiii. 44-58).
Friday, Jan. 24.—Later Preaching in Synagogue (Acts xvii. 1-14).
Saturday, Jan. 25.—Isaiah's Prophecy (Isa. lxi. 1-11).
Sunday, Jan. 26.—The Final Rejection (John xviii. 28-40).

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet (E-sa'ias. I'sa-iah.) And when he had opened the book, he (and) found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord (is is) upon me, because (Because) he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the (proclaim) brokenhearted, to preach deliverance (release) to the captives, and (And) recovering of sight to the blind, to (To) set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach (proclaim) the acceptable year of the Lord,

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floor. Perhaps an apartment for women at one side, separated by lattice work, and at the farther end, a reading desk, and the ark which held the rolls of Law and Prophets. **Stood up to read.**—Each synagogue had elders, or rulers, but there was no especial ordained ministry. Priest and Levite had no precedence here. Any competent person might offer, or be invited, to read.

II. A SERMON IN THE HOME SYNAGOGUE.

17. There was delivered unto him.—Two lessons were read in the synagogue each Sunday, one from the Law, the other from the Prophets. The first lesson had now been read, and as Jesus stood up, there was handed to him the roll of the prophet Isaiah. **Where it was written.**—The Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Tesment, then in use) is here apparently quoted from, although the expression, "To set at liberty them that are bruised," is from the Hebrew, or Isa. lviii. 6 (see Isa. lxi. 1, 2).

CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL.

18. He hath anointed me.—Kings were set apart and inaugurated by anointing. So Jesus was endowed with kingly powers and authority. In this wondrous prophecy are five great points:

1. TO PREACH GOOD TIDINGS TO THE POOR.—The gospel is designed to come to those who are literally poor; its promises and communions and hopes and joys are especially for them. If its principles are triumphant, all hurtful inequalities would be done away. In Christian society conditions are favorable to the production of wealth, and with a fair and kind distribution, all actual want would be abolished. The gospel is especially for the *poor in spirit*—the meek, and the lowly, those for whom earth in itself holds no treasure.

2. TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES.—The gospel literally abolishes slavery. In no Christian land with a free Bible is there any legalized slavery to-day. But Jesus does more than free from physical servitude. He breaks the bonds of appetite and passion, and sets men truly free. He proclaims forgiveness, and frees the soul from its dark bonds of guilt.

3. AND RECOVERING OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND.—How often as a result of medical skill, which is the result of Christian culture, is literal sight restored to blind eyes! And books are printed with raised letters so that the blind "can see the great thoughts of men" almost as well as others. But Jesus especially came to deliver men from the darkness of ignorance and superstition; he came to open the eyes of those who in their doubts and fears had lost all sight of God, and that better world,

"Which must be true, and must be seen by faith."

4. TO SET AT LIBERTY THEM THAT ARE BRUISED.—He came to deliver the oppressed, the wounded, and the broken hearted. "To set at liberty"—to give the power to rise above the sense of present pain and loss; so to open the future that one may see that—

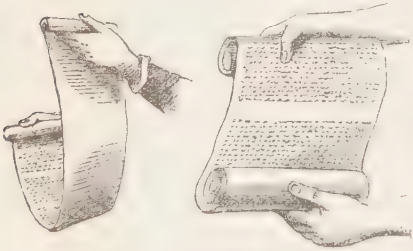
"Life is ever lord of death, and love can never lose its own."

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again (it back) to the minister (attendant), and sat down: and (And) the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is (To-day hath) this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words (words of grace) which proceeded out of his mouth: and (And) they said, Is not this Jō'seph's son?

5. TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.—The allusion here is to the year of jubilee, which came every fiftieth year (Lev. xxv. 8–13). On this year every Jewish captive was to be set free, all debts were cancelled, and every homestead that had been lost through fault, or misfortune, was restored to the family. All this was a type of the golden age that should dawn when Christ came; an age that should usher in righteousness, and glorious freedom; faith, and joys unfailing.



ROLL OF PARCHMENT.

20-22. And he closed the book.—Rather, he rolled up the scroll. Our Lord stopped short in the second verse, because he wished these gracious words to rest last on their ears rather than the sentence that follows, "The day of vengeance of our God" (*F.*). **And sat down.**—While reading the Holy Word it was the rule to reverently stand, but when one spoke he sat down. The text and the speaker were remarkable, and the audience watched and listened. **To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled.**—Other men must say, "We preach not ourselves," but Jesus was compelled to preach and disclose himself. God and heaven, all goodness and truth, were in his simple yet majestic character. He must declare himself. **All bare him witness.**—All felt the speaker's divine enthusiasm, the power and pathos of his words; yet in them were grounds of offence to them: "The very *grace* and *mercy* assumed that it was *they* who needed it and *he* who was to bestow it." **Is not this Joseph's son?**—The Jews in their synagogues did not sit in silence, but were accustomed to give full expression to their feelings, and to discuss and make remarks aloud (*C. B.*). Yes; the gracious speaker is the Son of man; the world has ever been ready to accept that fact. Men may also be ready to accept the fact that there is a Son of God. But to join the two, and link the lowliest to the highest, perfect simplicity to unspeakable majesty, men have found offence in this. Yet the hope of humanity is in this union; and man is linked to God, and earth to heaven, in Jesus, the child of earth, and Lord of heaven; the Son of man, and Son of God.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Welcome Visitor. 14, 15. From what place had Jesus returned? What were the main events which had occurred since he was last in Galilee? When had the spirit descended upon him? Where did Jesus teach? How was he received? **2. A Fulfilled Prophecy.** 15-19. What place is named which Jesus visited? What did he do on the Sabbath? From what book did he read? For what mission was the Christ anointed? For what further purposes was he sent? What finally was he to preach? **3. A Powerful Sermon.** 20-22. What did Jesus do when he had read the prophecy? What was the substance of his sermon? How was it received by his hearers? What did they say?

COLLECT.

Our Father, we thank thee for him who came from thee into this world. May we be of the poor to whom he preaches good tidings; the captives whom he releases; the blind to whom he gives sight; the afflicted to whom he brings deliverance. We pray for the day of full salvation: and the abounding joy of the perfect life: through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

1. JESUS NEVER SWERVED FROM HIS GREAT PURPOSE.—There was fame and glory for Christ in the beginning, but not that which he sought. It was a popularity founded on mistaken hopes; what wonder that it drifted at last into rejection? Knowing even now that it must be so, yet with the vision that looked beyond, how patiently he taught his lesson over and over, laying the foundation of the more enduring glory that was to be his.

> My Lord! thy patience wins me; thou couldst wait!
> Ay, more than wait! Thou couldst *endure*. Thy life
> Was wholly lost ere it was gained; and ye
> Had strength to have it so!

2. "There was great corruption in doctrines and practice at that time, but Christ did not on that account keep away from the synagogue." Christ is still an attendant upon the services of the church, though too often we are so out of harmony with spiritual things that we do not feel his presence. He does not stay away from prayer-meeting because it is dull, or from church because the singing is poor and the sermon not flowery. It is not men whom we slight when we stay away from the Lord's house, but the Lord.

3. Christ chose a subject that was appropriate to the occasion. The time had not yet come to speak of his sufferings. It was his life. The mountain peak does not lift itself abruptly from the plain. There is an ascent long, and sometimes imperceptible, leading up to it. The people of Israel were to be led step by step through the deep and tender meanings of a life of self-devotion to its wondrous culmination on Calvary. The lesson shows what the Christ will *accomplish*, not what he will *endure*. Oh, the weary road to accomplishment!

4. The Pharisees and Sadducees despised the poor. Ancient philosophers neglected them. But the gospel seeks to bless them. It is one proof that it is true. If it had been of *men*, it would have sought the rich and mighty. But it pours contempt on all human greatness, and seeks, like God, to do good to those whom the world overlooks, or despises (*Barnes*). To all of those who are destitute of what will make life beautiful comes the good news. No one can be poor again who has treasures laid up in heaven. No one is shabbily dressed who wears the garment of praise and the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. No one need long for the "bitter-sweet joys of earth" who is rich in soul.

5. There was a time when I thought all broken hearts were to be found among the poor. But I have seen a wealthy mother broken in heart over a ruined son; a palatial home holding for its choicest treasure the casket of a child; and a mansion bright with luxury, and sweet with flowers, yet dark from unfaithfulness, and bitter from desertion. This earth is not a stranger to tears. From Adam's day a wail has been going up to heaven from the broken-hearted. It is a mystery to me how all these broken-hearted can keep away from Jesus who has come to heal them (*Moody*).

6. DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES.—You will confer the greatest benefits on your city, not by raising its roofs, but by exalting its souls. For it is better that great souls should live in small habitations than that abject slaves should burrow in great houses (*Epictetus*). No power can bind the spirit which has attained the larger liberty.

> Build thee more stately mansions,
> Oh, my soul.
> As the swift seasons roll!
> Leave thy low vaulted past!
>
> Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
> Shut thee from Heaven with a dome more vast,
> Till thou at length art free,
> Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea (*Holmes*).

7. The acceptable year of the Lord. A jubilee year in truth, not for a nation, but for the world, not to end in a twelvemonth, but to continue till the end of time.

"How willingly suffer and toil for a while,
Thinking aye of their Lord and his welcoming smile!
And the patience of hope would grow strong and increase
As they counted the days of their year of release."

8. "This day is the Scripture fulfilled." Sin with all its resulting bitterness the world had realized;—poverty, pain, darkness, oppression.

"Sad at life's history, glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled anywhere! anywhere out of the world!"

Men were longing for a refuge, a comfort which no philosophy had yet given, which even the symbols of the worship of the one true God had not fully revealed. And He had come. I have read in Plato and Cicero sayings that are very wise and beautiful; but I never read in either of them, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden" (*Augustine*).

9. THE NAZARENES REJECTED HIM.—At a small literary gathering at which Thomas Carlyle was present, a lady was bewailing the wickedness of the Jews in their treatment of Jesus, and expressed regret that he had not appeared in our own time. "How delighted we should all be to open our doors to him, and listen to his divine precepts! Don't you think so, Mr. Carlyle?" He replied: "No, madam, I do not. I think that had he come fashionably dressed, with plenty of money, and preaching doctrines palatable to the highest orders, I might have had the honor of receiving from you a card of invitation, on the back of which would be written, 'To meet our Saviour'; but if he had come denouncing the Pharisees and associating with the lower orders, you would have treated him much as the Jews did, and have cried out, 'Take him to Newgate and hang him'."

AS YOUR DARKNESS AND DANGER DEMAND, SO YOUR PEACE AND PROTECTION SHALL BE.

NAZARETH.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins.
—Luke v. 24.

LESSON V. FEBRUARY 2.

THE POWER OF JESUS.

Luke v. 17-26.

Time.—May or June, A. D. 28. **Place.**—A private house in Capernaum.

Geographical Notes.—The miracle described in this lesson was wrought, as we learn from Mark (ii. 1), in the city of Capernaum. This city stood at the northwest curve of the lake of Galilee, and immediately on the shore. It was built, as its ruins show, of basalt, a black rock which abounds on that shore, and it must have presented a very gloomy appearance, except where the houses were whitewashed. It is now totally uninhabited, and where most of the houses stood there are only confused heaps of building stones, though some walls of the better class of houses still stand a few feet above the ground. It was probably ruined by earthquakes, for even in modern times some towns in the vicinity, such as Tiberias, and Safed, have been almost desolated by the same cause. Until Tiberias, which was built and founded by Herod the tetrarch in the days of Christ, superseded it, Capernaum was the chief city on the shore of the lake. Tiberias is now the only town on the whole of the shore, and it contains about three thousand inhabitants.

SITE OF CAPERNAUM.

Connecting History.—After the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth, he took up his abode at Capernaum, which became a center of most active labors. The miraculous draught of fishes soon followed, when Peter

"Did his Lord's commands, and felt himself a sinner."

Then came the first general tour of Galilee, during which occurred the healing of the leper.

"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me all clean."
"I will, be clean." And Jesus' hand, which ne'er
Touched the unclean, rested in love on him.

Typical is all this of work Jesus is ever doing.

"The healing of his seamless dress is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press, and we are whole again."

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as one of those days, that he was teaching; that and there were Phăr'ĭ-sees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town village, of

EXPLANATORY.

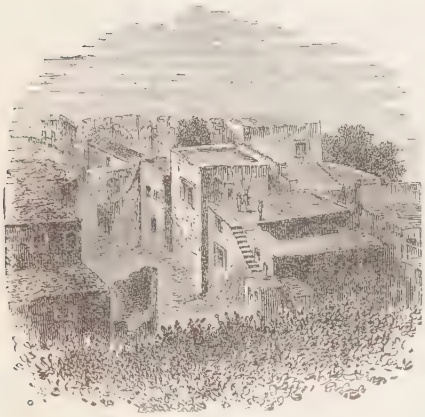
I. A CALL FOR COMPASSION.

17. He was teaching.—It is encouraging to think that great companies of men sought Jesus, not merely to see the miracles he wrought, but to listen to his blessed lessons. And rarely will men teach as Jesus taught who have not interested hearers. **And there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by.**—Formal Pharisees and zealous scribes from far and near were present to watch him. Geikie says, that he should thus draw the people after him was intolerable to the

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Jan. 27. Toiling in the Night (Luke v. 1-16).
Tuesday, Jan. 28.—The Paralytic Healed (Luke v. 17-26).
Wednesday, Jan. 29.—Not Come to Call the Righteous (Luke v. 27-39).
Thursday, Jan. 30.—Plenteous Redemption (Ps. cxxx.).
Friday, Jan. 31.—Trespasses Forgiven (Col. ii. 1-15).
Saturday, Feb. 1.—For His Name's Sake (I. John ii. 1-12).
Sunday, Feb. 2.—The Lesson in Mark (Mark ii. 1-12).

Gāl'ĭ-lee' and Jū-dæ'-a' and Je-ru'sa-lĕm: and the power of the Lord was present with him to heal them.



EASTERN HOUSETOP.

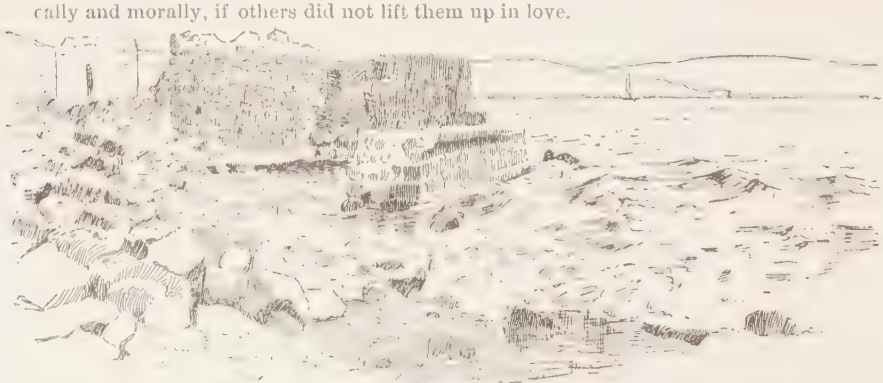
18 And' behold, men brought in bring on a bed a man which that was taken with a palsy: palsied: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay him him before him.

19 And when they could not find not finding by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiling tiles with his his couch into the midst before Jē'sus.

20 And when he saw seeing their faith, he said, unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

official religionists of his day. He was an unauthorized intruder on their peculiar province. He had no license to teach; had never studied in the schools of the rabbis; had never been set apart by laying on of hands. His freedom of speech and independence of traditional authorities, gave ground for suspicion that he was unsound, and thus a danger to the church, the faith, and the prescriptive influence of the priests and rabbis. Heresy-hunting has been in all ages a passion among ecclesiastics of every name, in proportion to their zeal for the forms and letter of religion, and their want of true spiritual life. But it should be noted that Jesus was no mere destructive critic. Every word he spoke deepened the sense of moral obligation, and the foundation of an absolute faith in God.

18, 19. Men bring on a bed a man that was palsied.—The bed was probably a simple mattress, and we learn from Mark that it was borne of four. *Palsy* is a contraction of *paralysis*, a disease which deprives the affected part of sensation, or the power of motion, or both. In its worst form it is generally incurable. It is a type of sin, which at length seems to take the power of *feeling*, and of *willing*, from the soul. The saddest disease in the universe is *moral* paralysis. **They sought to bring him in.**—A man who can help himself should do so. When he can not, the next best thing is to seek and accept help from others. Over and over men would be hopeless, physically and morally, if others did not lift them up in love.



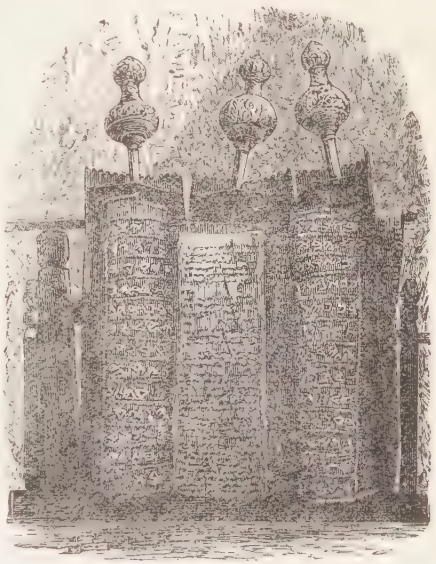
SHORES OF GALILEE.

21 And the scribes and the Phar'i-sees began to reason, saying, Who is this [which / that] speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But [when] Jē'sus [perceived / perceiving] their [thoughts, he answering / reasonings, answered and] said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins [be / are] forgiven thee; or to say, [Rise up / Arise] and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power [upon / on] earth to forgive sins (he said unto [the sick of the palsy / him that was palsied]), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go [into thine / unto thy] house.



ANCIENT COPY OF SAMARITAN LAW.

Sad it is to be wounded and weak!
Sad to be helplessly borne along!
Nobler to bear than be borne, O man!
And blest the heart that to help is strong!

They went upon the housetop.—The crowd made a direct approach to Jesus impossible. So, probably by outside stairs, which were common, they ascended to the flat roof of this one-storied eastern house, and taking up the tiles, that is, opening the roof, over the place where the Teacher was standing, they lowered the helpless invalid into the very presence of Jesus. *Do not wait for the needy to beseech you.* As ships meet at sea, a moment together, when words of greeting must be spoken, and then away into the deep, so men meet in this world; and I think we should cross no man's path without hailing him, and, if he needs, giving him supplies (*Beecher*).

II. RESPONSE OF COMPASSION.

20. And seeing their faith.—The faith of the paralytic and his friends. Christ's treatment of the man would indicate that it was he who had the faith and imparted it to his helpers. There are no sufferers whose afflictions have been hallowed who are not centers of spiritual influence to some friends, or neighbors, round them (*Glover*).

Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.—Perhaps the man's disease was the result of sin, and Christ struck at the source of his sorrow. At any rate, our deepest need is of forgiveness. "The wise physician pays little heed to secondary symptoms, but grapples with the disease. Christ makes the tree good, and trusts the good tree to make, as it will, good fruit. The first thing to do, in order to heal men's misery, is to make them pure: and the first step towards that is to assure them of Divine forgiveness" (*McLaren*). No prodigal will ever return, no matter how wretched his lot may be, if he understands that he must meet an unforgiving father.

When one is weary with the shame of sin
The sweetest words are, "Son, thou art forgiven."

21. Who is this that speaketh blasphemies?—The expression of Jesus might well startle the doctors and defenders of the law. It was meant to startle them. The world had never heard such words before. To blaspheme is to speak impiously, or irreverently, of God, to deny to him his supreme place and power, or to claim for one's self his prerogatives. It is an attempt at usurpation, a kind of treason of the soul.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, amazement took hold on all. and they glorified God, and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

Who can forgive sins but God alone?—As crimes against a neighbor are sins against the state, so all sins are sins against God; and no sin can be forgiven unless God forgives. The scribes were right, and in assuming to forgive sins, Jesus either was guilty of gross blasphemy, or—*he was Divine.*

22-24. What reason ye?—As Matthew expresses it (ix. 4), "Wherefore think ye evil?" Why will you not interpret my words for me, rather than against me? **Whether is easier to say?**—It is as much greater to forgive sins than to heal sickness, as the soul is greater than the body. But it may be easier to *speak* forgiveness than healing, because the effect and truth of the words are not so open and apparent. **But that ye may know.**—"You say that God alone can forgive sins. Very well. And only God can raise this paralyzed body, and make it whole and sound. If I do this, it will prove that I am from God, and he is with me. And if I thus show that I have Divine power, and can do the work of God, why do you accuse me of blasphemy when I speak pardon unto men?" Forthwith he turned to the wasted body chained with paralysis and said, *Arise.* Strange command! Jesus bids the impossible; for this man can not arise, he can not stand, he can move neither hand nor foot! But learn this, and remember,—when Jesus gives any command whatever, he gives the power to obey. Only, the human will must respond to the command, and *proceed to obey.*

25. Immediately he rose up before them.—Forthwith the living corpse, his eyes doubtless fixed on the wondrous speaker, acting on Christ's word, felt strength once more course through his veins, and stood in health amidst the crowd. Then folding up his hammock, and taking it with him, as Christ had ordered, he went away before them all (*G.*). As soon as we are healed we have a duty to arise. A well man has no right to be lying abed while work is around him waiting to be done.

26. Amazement took hold on all.—To feel that we stand within touch of the power of God, is startling; yet at length it confronts and ennobles us. Not all of this company permanently glorified God, though the spell of the hour was resistless. The scribes and Pharisees went forth more bitter than ever. Whatever his goodness and power, this Teacher and King was not after their heart; and it is with the heart that he ever is rejected or received. **We have seen strange things.**—Literally, in the Greek text, "We have seen paradoxes to-day"; things so high and so humble, so awful and so simple, such misery and such gladness.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Human Weakness. 17-21. Where had Jesus now taken up his abode? Who were listening to his teaching at the time of this lesson? Who was brought to the house? How was he brought into the presence of Jesus? What did Jesus see in the sick man and his friends? What did he say? How did the scribes and Pharisees reason? **2. Divine Power.** 22-26. How did Jesus show his divine power of perception? What questions did he ask? What did he give as a reason for the miracle which followed? What command did he give to the helpless man? How fully was it obeyed? What effect did this have on most of those who saw it?

COLLECT.

Dear Lord, we thank thee that through all the crowd and stress of life we can come to thee; and that sometimes, bound and helpless, we can even be borne to thee. Give us thy healing. If it can be well, give us health and strength for this life. But above all, cure us of sin; and make our souls to know the sweetness of thy presence, and the joys of the immortal life. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

1. AN EVERY-DAY GOSPEL.—(1) Apparently it was not the Sabbath this time. Day by day Jesus taught, and healed. Can we who seek to be like him keep our Christian work and teaching within the limits of one day out of seven. "Six days shalt thou labor," says Matthew Henry, "not only for the world, but for the soul." Whenever there was occasion Jesus' power was present to heal. It was his mission, it is ours.

And can we ask for grander work than
His,
Who said that more than faith and hope
is love?
And lived to heal, to comfort, and to
bless?

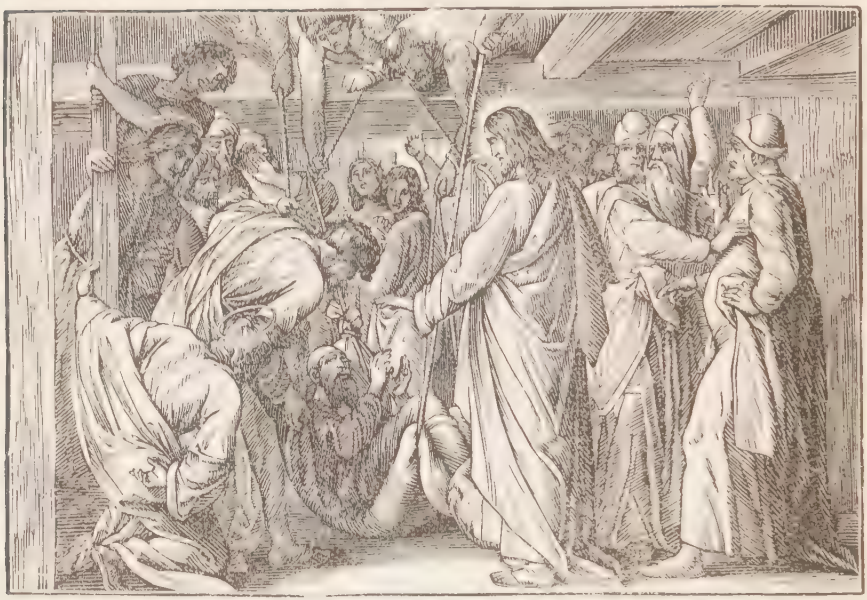
(2) How many are there in the midst of our assemblies, where the gospel is preached, that do not sit *under* the word, but sit *by*. It is to them as a tale that is told to them, not a message that is sent them; they are willing that we should preach before them, not that we should preach to them (*M. Henry*).

2. A HUMAN INSTRUMENTALITY.—Men are used as instruments to bring others to Christ. Said Father Taylor, when in his last sickness somebody suggested that the angels were about him, "I don't want angels, I want folks. Folks are better than angels." God might have used angels to co-work with him, but he chose "folks." We don't know much about Andrew, except that he brought Peter to Christ, and that is honor enough for any man (*S. S. Journal*). Bear your friends to Christ in the arms of prayer.

"Yes, pray for whom thou lovest; if uncounted wealth were thine—
The treasures of the boundless deep, the riches of the mine—
Thou couldst not to thy cherished friends a gift so dear impart
As the earnest benediction of a deeply loving heart."

3. A PRACTICAL FAITH.—That faith is greatest which struggles triumphantly through all difficulties and will take no denial (*Cook*). The steam engine draws the train, but the connecting link is necessary. So faith is the connecting link that unites us to Christ, and Christ saves us (*S. S. J.*). In this Jesus saw their faith. Now he has here taught us to put the best construction upon words and actions that they will bear. Though they had not seemed to think it possible that he could cure unless the patient were in his presence, he recognized the faith which brought him there. It is a comfort to us that we serve a Master who is willing to make the best of us (*M. Henry*). "We would do many more things if we believed less in impossibilities."

4. A DEEP NEED.—Jesus looks to the deepest causes, he meets the greatest need first. Truly the Orientals were not wrong in regarding suffering as the result of sin. Sickness of every sort is caused somewhere, somehow by sin—broken law. It is its



CHRIST HEALING THE PARALYTIC.

natural and inevitable consequence. The forgiveness of sins, "that is the blessings thou art most to prize and seek; for if thy sins be forgiven thee, though the sickness be continued, it is in mercy; if they be not, though the sickness be removed, it is in wrath." "The body is to the soul what clothing is to the body—do not mend the rent in the clothing to the neglect of the wounds in the body."

> In the stinging of the conscience man will find his keenest smart;
> And no ache in all the body meets the aching of the heart.

5. AN UNSPOKEN QUESTION.—Do not expect too ready faith from the world; be willing to give proofs and reasons. Christ treats the Pharisees' thought as a reasonable one. They had a right to require evidence, he had the power to give it. An impostor might easily say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Christ accepts the test and shows himself the Divine Healer. Yet by their later conduct these witnesses show that they wilfully closed their eyes to the meaning of what they saw. "Truth embitters those whom it does not enlighten."

6. A GLORIOUS ANSWER.—Said Aristotle, in giving to a needy but worthless person "I give not to him, but to the human in him." The sick man spoke no word, his need was his prayer. Lost in soul, helpless in body, Jesus touched the spark of the divine in him and it glowed until the man was transfigured. He might well glorify God. As well may all who enjoy the miraculous blessings of a *Christian* civilization. Do we think enough of the source of the good things which are ours?

Jesus { FORGIVES OUR DELINQUENCIES
HEALS OUR DISEASES
REDEEMS FROM DESTRUCTION
CROWNS WITH DELIGHT

Psalm ciii. 3, 4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?
—Luke vi. 46.

LESSON VI. FEBRUARY 9.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Luke vi. 41-49.

Time.—Summer, A. D. 28, but a short time after the last lesson. **Place.** — By poor tradition the Sermon on the Mount was preached on the Mount of Beatitudes, or the "Horns of Hattin," a hill of moderate height with two cones, standing two or three miles from the mid-west coast of the Sea of Galilee. (See Geographical Notes.)

THISTLE.

Geographical Notes. — The mountain on which the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, is absolutely unknown. Our inability to determine its locality grows out of the fact that the text of Matthew, who alone mentions this sermon, gives no clew by which to distinguish it among hundreds of mountains in Galilee which would be altogether suitable. The writer of these notes does not believe that the speech of which the present lesson is a part was the Sermon on the Mount. He thinks that it was another sermon, different in time, place, and subject-matter, but containing some of the same precepts. The traditional site of the sermon is a mountain about two miles from Tiberias, called Hattin, whose summit splits into two peaks called "The Horns of Hattin"; but this site was fixed upon by the Crusaders, whose ignorance of the geography of Palestine was about on a par with their ignorance of their own duty in regard to the Holy Sepulchre; and the tradition has come down from them. They fixed this site, as they did many others, from mere caprice, with no evidence whatever. It is high time that modern writers had abandoned the custom of referring to this mountain as the one on which the Saviour's great sermon was delivered, not only for the reason already given, but because there is no suitable surface on its slopes for the purpose. There is a plain of a few acres at its southeastern foot, but its sides are too steep for an audience to sit and hear a discourse.

The Sermon on the Mount.—This "noblest body of moral teaching ever given in discourse," should be committed to memory by every child. The discourse as found in Matthew (chapters v. to vii.), should be preferred as being most full and complete. Many of the ablest scholars make a distinction between the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded by Matthew, and the Sermon on the Plain, of which this lesson from Luke is a part. It does not detract from the dignity of Christ to suppose that he repeated, under varied circumstances, the great principles of his Kingdom, his most sublime and vital sayings.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest [considerest] not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either [Or] how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull [cast] out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye,

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Feb. 3.—Law of Work on the Sabbath (Luke vi. 1-11).
Tuesday, Feb. 4.—The Twelve Called (Luke vi. 12-19).
Wednesday, Feb. 5.—"The Beatitudes" (Luke vi. 20-26).
Thursday, Feb. 6.—Loving and Doing Good (Luke vi. 27-40).
Friday, Feb. 7.—The Story of Fruits and Foundations (Luke vi. 41-49).
Saturday, Feb. 8.—How to Pray (Matt. vi. 5-15).
Sunday, Feb. 9.—The Lesson in Matthew (Matt. vii. 15-29).

and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For a there is no good tree that bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth nor again a corrupt tree bring that bringeth forth good fruit.

EXPLANATORY.

I. SEEING AND BEING.

41. Why beholdest thou the mote.—The word "mote" translates the Greek *κάρφος*, a small splinter or chip; it means anything proverbially small. "You may see a small disorder, or defect, in your brother's vision, and be unconscious of a greater one in your own." Christ is condemning the habit of *censoriousness*. A close study of the demerit of carping and faultfinding would work much reform in us. Good old Owen Feltham (born 1690) writes: Nothing is so easy as to censure; few works are performed without errors. Men think by censuring to be accounted wise; but, in my conceit, there is nothing shows more of the fool. For this you may ever observe, that they who know the least are most given to censure; and hence, as I believe, men of secluded lives, largely ignorant of the world, are often rash in this particular. Frequent dispraises, at least, show an uncharitable mind. Any clown may see when a furrow is crooked; but where is the man who can plow me a straight one? The best works are not without defects. The cleanest corn is not without some dirt among it. I wish men would ever examine two things before they judge: whether the work may not have more of good than ill; and whether they could have done it better. **And considered not the beam.**—A splinter is small, a beam is large. This expression is proverbial. The words of Christ especially strike the religious teachers of his time, men who saw little defects in others, and ignored far greater ones in themselves. He said they were hypocrites. They covered up everything with religion. "Morality is not religion, but morality and religion have an organic unity. False religions sever religion and morality. Christ makes morality grow out of religion" (*Jacob*). It takes a very long time to take to heart Whately's maxim, that ten thousand of the greatest faults in our neighbors are of less consequence to us than one of the smallest in ourselves.

42. How canst thou say.—Christ here appeals, as he ever does, to conscience and common sense. How can you, who are grossly wrong, presume to correct your brother, who is far less astray? Can not one who needs help, give help? Yes; but if he condemns sin in another while he condones it in himself, he makes a mockery of virtue, and shows himself that hurtful thing—a hypocrite. **Cast out first the beam.**—A good man does not go around looking for motes; and if his clear eyes see them he will help his neighbor indirectly, rather than officiously, to be rid of them. Only good men are in position to truly help their fellows. The fervent prayer of the righteous man avails much with God. And so does the fervent speech of the righteous man avail much with men.

II. BEING AND DOING.

43. There is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit.—Jesus teaches that life is the outcome of character; that conduct will depend upon the controlling principles. It is impossible for a good man to be guilty of deliberate murder, or theft, or profanity, for the flow of his life is all against these things. **Nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit.**—Christ announces a great true principle. A man, under impulse, may do good deeds, or bad deeds, that are out of character with himself; but habitually, a man acts out the life that is in him. He even makes a choice as to the motives and purposes of his life; but his conduct, his fruit, will disclose the choice he has made. Many a man makes needless mistakes. 1. The man who expects to obtain happiness without a holy life. 2. The man who expects to obtain a holy life without a renewed and holy heart. 3. The man who expects to obtain a renewed heart without accepting Christ, and entering into the truth which he discloses.

44. Each tree is known by its own fruit.—We rightly judge of the heart by its manifestations. Back of profane lips lies a profane heart; behind an unclean life lies

44 For every (each) tree is known by his (its) own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A (The) good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an (the) evil man (*man*) out of the evil treasure of his heart (*treasure*) bringeth forth that which is evil: for (out) of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

GRAPES OF PALESTINE.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Whosoever (Every one that) cometh (to, unto) me, and heareth my (sayings, words,) and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like:

an unclean heart: below a mean and sordid life is a mean and sordid heart. The reverse is also blessedly true. Behind a life that is reverent, and pure, and generous, and hopeful, is a heart that adores, and aspires, and loves. **Of thorns men do not gather figs.**—You may mistake leaf and flower, but you will not mistake when the time of fruit comes. A reverent and all-controlling Christian faith *does* make any life good and beautiful; the fruitage is a *natural* and *necessary* result of the faith. The materialist and sensualist also bear their inevitable fruits. No man rises above his faith, his purpose, and his hope.

45. The good man . . . the evil man.—Men may practice deception for a time, but at last the truth will out. Men may be misunderstood, yet at length they shall be known. We may judge of *systems*, too, by their fruits. "Test the Bible by its effects. 1. Upon the laws of nations. 2. Upon their liberty. 3. Upon their morality. 4. Upon their charity. 5. Upon their literature. 6. Upon international laws. 7. Upon social life and domestic relations. This field is too little studied. The conclusion is irresistible. Judged by its fruits the Bible is a good book" (*Hitchens*).

FIG TREE AND FRUIT.

III. GOOD AND BAD BUILDING.

46-48. Why call ye me, Lord, Lord.—Doubtless on the part of many there were vague opinions as to his place, but Christ evidently was held in high regard by the people who heard him. Underneath the Lord's words lies this thought: "Those blind guides of whom I have been telling you, they with their lips profess to adore the eternal God of Israel, and yet live their lives of sin. Do not you, my followers, the same thing. Call me not Lord, unless I *am* Lord" (*P. C.*). **Every one that cometh unto me.**—Christ here makes salvation

48 He is like a man which built an building a house, and who digged and went deep, and laid the a foundation on a upon the rock: and when the a flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon brake against that house, and could not shake it: for because it was founded upon a rock. had been well builded.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an a house upon the earth; without a foundation: against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

depend upon three things: 1. Coming into his presence, within the range of his voice and life. 2. Hearing his words. 3. Doing them. **He is like a man who builded a house, who digged.**—Every life, every character, is a structure, an edifice, gradually built up; its solidity and permanence will depend upon its foundation. Somewhere there is absolute truth, upon which the soul can rest, and upon which it can build plans and hopes as abiding as the eternal hills. Christ says those who do his words shall find such a foundation. Where do Christ's words lead us? To rest our life and hope on *rite* and *ceremony?* Far from that. To rest upon *emotion*, "deep but variant"? Ah, no. Christ's words lead us to make an utter *consecration of the soul* to God. When once life is wholly given up to him, it builds well under any sky. **When a flood arose.**—The time that tries is sure to come; but no flood will bear away this life—it *can not shake it.* You have seen such a life. Earthly fortune went down, but the life stood. The voices of happy friendships died away and left him in lonely silence. Yet he remained firm. Temptations in a thousand ways came, but his soul did not shift. His body was enfeebled with disease and pain, and death came on with all possible darkness; he knew what grief meant; he did not boast; but his heart and his hope were all unchanged,—his house stood firm, no "storm could shake it."

49. But he that heareth, and doeth not.—There is a fundamental difference between one who hears Christ's words, and conscientiously proceeds to obey them, and one who hears and neglects them. And there must result diverse character and destiny. So far as the finding of foundations is concerned, we may well know that on all the sand or sea of life, if we find not rock in Christ Jesus, there is no rock. We can count on keeping nothing save as we build on him.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The True Foundation of Doing. What is likely to be true of those who criticize others? Can one who is himself impure be effective in purifying other lives? What name does Christ give to such as attempt to do so? What is his command? Does a tree produce fruit which is not according to its nature? How then do we judge the tree? How does Christ apply this to the life of men? What is the source out of which the mouth speaketh? **2. The True Foundation of Being.** What question implying disapproval does Christ here ask? By what three acts does he characterize another class of people? To whom does he compare the latter? What effect does the flood have on the house built on the rock? To whom does he liken those who hear, and do not obey? What becomes of the house built on the sand? Is the mere acknowledgment of Christ enough to hold us above the floods of disaster and death? What is?

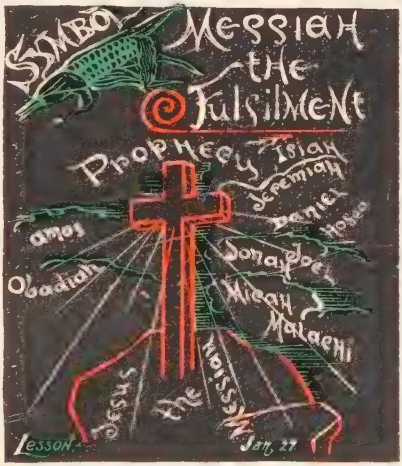
COLLECT.

Save us, O Lord, from the sin of judging our brother, and magnifying his faults. Make us humble in the presence of our own. May our words and deeds be genuine, and brave, and loving, because they come from hearts that are pure and good. May we do thy will, and so be ever safe, since nothing can withstand or shake thy will and purpose. May we be in league with thee, and ever more and more become like thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Symbol
Are You A Messenger of Christ?
Lesson 1
Jan. 6

Growing in Grace
He Loved The House of God
Lesson 2
Jan. 13

This is My Beloved Son
Lesson 3
Jan 20


Symbol
Messiah the Fulfilment
Prophecy
Isiah
Jeremiah
Daniel
Hosea
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Malachi
Jesus
the
Messiah
Lesson
Jan. 27

HEALER
Symbol
Jesus Heals the Sick
Helps the Sinner
Lesson
Feb.

BLESSED
Symbol
Christ
Lesson 6
Feb.

Hints for Blackboard Talks.

Lesson II.—First Quarter.

Jesus, as a boy, loved the house of God. He loved to hear the wise men tell of his Father in heaven. If we want to become strong, loving men and women, we must begin early to love God and to study the Word of God.

It is harder to forget the evil we have learned than it is to learn to do right.

A tree, bent when a twig, will be crooked. A child who learns to love God when a child will cling to God through life. Life is not too long to serve God in even at the longest.

Lesson I.—First Quarter.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. He was humble, yet Jesus said of him that he was great. He was willing to do the work God set aside for him to do, just as well as he could, and was willing to give God the glory.

He preached and taught that there was to come One greater than he. He was the messenger of Jesus. We may not be able to do all we would like to do for Jesus, but this we can do: We can be a messenger for him. We can tell some one of his love, and lead them to him.

Lesson IV.—First Quarter.

Develop a lesson on prophecy. Look up the principal prophecies of the coming of Christ. The people expected a Messiah at this time. They expected a king in the line of David. An earthly kingdom. Christ's work a spiritual one. The prophets had made plain that the work of Christ was to be a spiritual work; but the people did not understand. Jesus possessed the power to do miracles; he used this power to show forth the glory of God and to do good. He healed the sick and taught the Word of God.

Lesson III.—First Quarter.

John's mission fulfilled. Behold the Lamb of God. Jesus, who has been hoped for and waited for all the years of prophecy has at last come to bless the world. John recognizes him as the Messiah. John is now willing to step aside and let Jesus be the bright light.

God bears witness that Jesus is His Son, the one sent of God to be the Saviour of the world. There is but one Saviour — Jesus. We are asked to accept him; we are asked to make him our personal Saviour.

Lesson VI.—First Quarter.

As a teacher Jesus Christ has never had an equal. Jesus taught of life here as well as life in heaven. He taught that the best life that could be lived was a preparation for a heavenly life.

He taught that no life was safe that was not built on the rock of faith in God. The man who builds on the sand soon learns the truth of the words of Jesus Christ by seeing his hopes swept away. The man who builds on the solid rock, Christ Jesus, finds foundation sure and safe.

Lesson V.—First Quarter.

Christ's mission was to save the world and reconcile it to God. This is first. He taught as no man taught. He spoke as no man spoke. He healed the sick and made the blind to see. He did these things because he was the Messiah, the Son of God. No doubt he loved to do them. He was tender and loving. He did not think of any glory that might come to him because he did these things. He did his best work on those who had faith in him and no one who came to him in faith believing was turned away.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

1. "He only is fit to be a reprover of others who jealously and severely judges himself." No one who is not himself *blameless* can consistently condemn another. Yet the most faulty are as a rule the most censorious, and he who is most like his Master is most merciful and forgiving. We show our realization of the guilt of sin not by searching for it in others, but by condemning it in ourselves and banishing it from our own lives. Because we must not judge others, which is a great sin, it does not follow that we must not reprove others, which is a great duty. Yet those who are themselves guilty of the faults of which they accuse others, or of worse, bring shame upon themselves, and are not likely to do good to those whom they reprove (*Henry*).

2. You can always tell the prevailing temper of a man's life by his deeds, just as you tell from the leaning of trees which way the prevailing winds blow. If a man speaks kindly, or acts generously, from a selfish end, he will be sure to show that end in due time. In the long run, a man will not *act* better than he *is*. He will either bring himself up to the level of his acts, or his acts down to the level of himself. The only way to get sin out of your life is to get the root of sin out of your heart, and the only sure process is to give Jesus the heart and enthrone him there (*Cuyler*). Truths are the roots of duties. A rootless duty, one that has no truth below it out of which it grows, has no life and will have no growth (*Phillips Brooks*).

3. A crab tree may bear fruit fair to the eye, but it is sour because it does not come from a good root. A moral person may give God outward obedience, and to the eyes of others it may seem glorious; but this obedience is sour, because it does not come from the sweet and pleasant root of faith. A child of God gives him the obedience of faith, and that ameliorates and sweetens his services. And loving deeds are always beautiful (*Watson*). *The Christian Faithful Amid Barren Scenes.*—Those who travel through deserts would often be at a loss for water if certain indications did not guide them to a supply. The secret wells are for the most part discoverable from the verdure which is nourished by their presence. So the fruitfulness of good works of the believer amidst the deadness and sterility around him, proclaim the Christian life (*Salter*).

4. "According to Christ's example, we should rather prove with deeds that we are Christians, than with words." Let grace and goodness be the principal loadstone of thy affections. For love which hath ends will have an end; whereas that which is founded on true virtue will always continue (*Dryden*). The familiar use of his name is but mockery when the heart is untrue. We may deceive man, but never God. We have too often cried with little more meaning than the persecutors of old, "Hail, King of the Jews." Let not the lips be silent with this thought, but let the heart speak the more truly.

5. The clashing of creeds and the strife
Of the many beliefs, that in vain
Perplex man's heart and brain,
Are naught but the rustle of leaves,
When the breath of God upheaves
The boughs of the tree of life,
And they subside again!
And I remembered still
The words, and from whom they came—
"Not he that repeateth the name
But he that doeth the will."
Poor, sad humanity,
Through all the dust and heat,
Turns back with bleeding feet,
By the weary road it came,
Unto the simple thought,
By the Great Master taught,
And that remaineth still:
"Not he that repeateth the name
But he that doeth the will"
(*Longfellow*).

6. Without a holy heart and a holy life all will be ruined in the hour of temptation (*Quesnel*). The rock is true discipleship, or genuine subjection to Christ; the sand an empty profession and mere external service. Terrible the ruin! How lively must this imagery have been to an audience accustomed to the fierceness of an eastern tempest, and the suddenness and completeness with which it sweeps everything before it (*J., F. and B.*). He saves, and he alone; and yet he can not unless in faith we will let him: and true faith can not exist without expression in good works.

MOUNT OF BEATITUDES.

7. WHICH ARE MOTES AND WHICH ARE BEAMS?—We are apt to answer such a question according to our tastes and our habits; the motes are the sins "we are inclined to," and the beams those "we have no mind to." To one, the mote is covetousness, and the beam is some questionable social indulgence. To another, the mote is sharp practice in business, and the beam taking a walk on a Sunday. To a third, the mote is spending the evening scandalizing one's neighbors, and the beam is spending it at chess. To a fourth, the mote is behaving like a bear, or any other brute, in his own house, and the beam any offense against good manners in his neighbor's house. To a fifth, the mote is theft, and the beam is being found out and exposed. To a sixth, the mote is fraudulent bankruptcy; and the beam unsound views about original sin. Judgments as grotesque as these did Jesus meet in his day. What did he mean by the mote and the beam? This—that the sins of publicans and sinners, who knew no better, their drunkenness, profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, their disregard of religion and morality, were as motes compared with the sins of scribes and Pharisees, who laid claim to much goodness, and yet were covetous, unjust, extortionate, and merciless, under the cover of a religious profession. Their sins were beams, and the beam of beams was hypocrisy (*H. S. Brown*).

HE WHO BUILDS ON ROCK IS SAFE
RIGHT SHALL STAND

GOLDEN TEXT.
They glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us.
—Luke vii. 16.

LESSON VII. FEBRUARY 16.

THE GREAT HELPER.

Luke vii. 2-16.

Time.—Soon after the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, in the early summer of A. D. 28.

Places.—Capernaum, and Nain, which lies about twenty-five miles southwest of Capernaum, near the south border of Galilee.

Geographical Notes.—While the city of Capernaum was built, as was stated in the Geographical Notes under a previous lesson, of the black rock called basalt, there is found in the midst of the ruins, not far from the lake shore, the foundation of a synagogue of white limestone. The walls are still about three feet high above the ground, and the broken pieces of columns and other ornamental work which lie scattered about prove it to have been a building of some architectural pretensions. As no limestone is found within several miles of Capernaum, it must have been quarried at some considerable distance, perhaps on the opposite shore of the lake. It is believed that this was the synagogue built by the centurion of our lesson, and that it was quite a costly structure, much the most important in the city at the time of its erection.

RUINS OF SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die, at the point of death.

3 And when he heard of, concerning Jē'sus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching, asking him that he would come and heal, save his servant.

I. A GREAT HEALTH-GIVER.

EXPLANATORY.

2. A certain centurion's servant.—The Roman army was divided into legions containing from three thousand to six thousand men. In each legion were sixty centuries, or hundreds, each commanded by a centurion. The office corresponded to that of captain in our army. The servant was a slave, perhaps captured in a campaign on some frontier. The centurion probably commanded a small garrison in Capernaum.

3-5. When he heard concerning Jesus.—The centurion was plainly a well-informed and practical man. He was not ignorant of Christ's work, and judged that in this crisis he could help him. He sent elders, very likely from his own synagogue.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Feb. 10.—Healing and Raising (Luke vii. 1-16).
Tuesday, Feb. 11.—Christ's Estimate of John (Luke vii. 18-35).
Wednesday, Feb. 12.—Which Will Love Most? (Luke vii. 36-50).
Thursday, Feb. 13.—Æneas and Dorcas (Acts ix. 31-42).
Friday, Feb. 14.—Comfort One Another (I. Thess. iv. 9-18).
Saturday, Feb. 15.—God a Refuge (Psalm lxii).
Sunday, Feb. 16.—So Great Faith (Matt. viii. 1-13).

4 And they, when they came to Jē'sus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was He is worthy for whom he should that thou shouldest do this for him:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath himself built us a our synagogue.

ROMAN CENTURIONS.

6 Then And Jē'sus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter come under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a the word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me myself soldiers: and I say unto to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it: it.

9 When And when Jē'sus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Is'ra-el.

They would be able, with more grace than himself to plead his cause. **He is worthy.**—The elders were true to their trust. Indeed, the centurion seems to have been a man of noble qualities. Born in heathenism, and trained to a hard life, he no sooner came into the presence of the true faith than he loved it and gave it support. Roman masters had power of life and death over their slaves, and compassion seemed a rare thing and to be apologized for. But this man held his servant dear, and sought earnestly his welfare. The centurions mentioned in the New Testament all excite our favor, and impress us well as to the quality of men in their grade of command in the Roman army. Note the centurion on guard at the cross (Matt. xxvii. 54); the one who guarded Paul to Rome (Acts xxvii. 1-3), and Cornelius (Acts x. 1).

6. Jesus went with them.—Small need had they to make any special appeal for a foreigner, for Jesus knew no aliens; *his* people were *all* people. **Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy.**—The messengers seem to have gone beyond the intention of the officer in *bringing* Jesus, for he dispatches others deprecating his being put to so much trouble. Indeed (from Matt. viii. 8) he seems to have followed, and addressed Jesus himself. He shrinks from asking too much, or taking too great liberty with Jesus. **Only say the word.**—He attributes to Jesus absolute power in the spiritual realm; to him there is no fiction and no limitation in this Lord's mighty works.

9. I am also a man under authority.—"I understand what power and authority mean. I am under orders myself; and I obey those who are over me. I also command, and my soldiers do my bidding. Demons and diseases are subject unto you. Give your command, they must obey."

10. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled.—Truly the character of this centurion was remarkable. He was,—1. A soldier accustomed to scenes of bloodshed,

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

MOURNERS.

11 And it came to pass the day soon after, afterwards, that he went into to a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people, a great multitude.

12 Now when he came nigh drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

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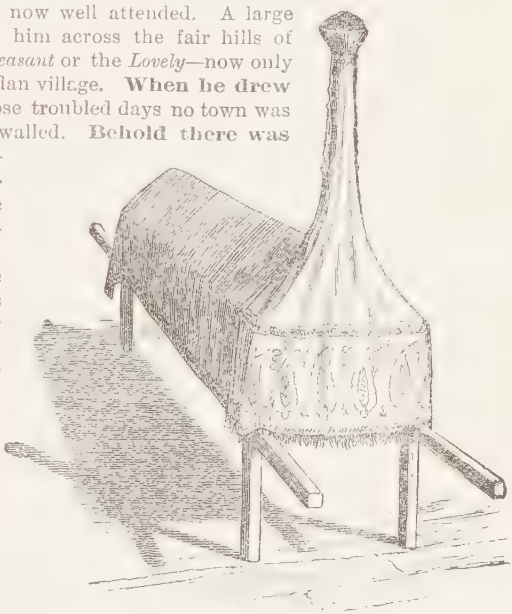
yet preserving, amid all the hardening tendencies of his profession, a tender heart. 2. A slave owner, yet solicitous for the welfare of his slave. 3. A representative of an oppressive and hated power, who yet secured the respect and affection of the subjugated people among whom he lived. 4. A proselyte to the religion of Israel, yet more truly religious than the people whose faith he had adopted. 5. Essentially a Pagan by birth, a Jew by adoption, a Christian by faith. The first heathen man of whom we read that he acknowledged Christ (*Bailey*). It would seem that this man's faith outran Christ's expectation. No one in Israel had grasped such lofty truth.

10. Returning, found the servant whole.—The prayer was answered, the soldier's faith was met. "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee," are Christ's final words in Matthew's record. And so ever, Jesus is a source of help and joy—*as thou hast believed.*

II. A GREAT LIFE-GIVER.

11, 12. He went to a city called Nain.—In the height of his popularity, Jesus was now well attended. A large company walked with him across the fair hills of Galilee to Nain, the *Pleasant* or the *Lovely*—now only a wretched Mohammedan village. **When he drew near to the gate of the city.**—In those troubled days no town was safe against marauders, if it were not walled. **Behold there was carried out one that was dead.**—What a strange meeting of diverse processions! "Face to face stand the Prince of Life with his attendants, and the waiters on death." It was then no new scene; it is now not old. Wrapped in the grave cloth, and borne on a bier—for coffins were unknown in that region—is the only son, the stay and hope of a widowed mother. **Much people of the city were with her.**—There is more of tenderness in the heart of the world than we are apt to think. A sorrowing soul has sympathy on every side beyond its knowledge. None of us are alone in our griefs. If we want pity or love or help, it is ready for us. When men see real sorrow they can not be indifferent. The busiest man in the crowded city streets will stop at a cry of distress, or the sight of a tearful face (*Trumbull*).



EASTERN BIER.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came *nigh* and touched the bier: and *they that bare him* (the bearers) stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he (delivered) gave him to his mother.

16 And (there came a) fear (took hold) on all: and they glorified God, saying, (That a) A great prophet is (risen up) arisen among us; and, (That) God hath visited his people.

13-15. He had compassion.—Sin, and death, and human grief, affected Jesus more than any other who ever walked the earth. He gave full proof of his compassion in his own bitter sorrows and death. It was no desire to show his power that seemed to move him to his present act; it was his compassion; he could not forbear healing the broken heart of this mother. Tenderly approaching her he bids her not to weep. Touching the bier he stops its progress. And then he speaks to the dead. Strange speaker! Will the dead hear? **I say unto thee, Arise.**—Truly, this man is the world's great Lover, and the world's one Lord! Even death is subject to him. **He that was dead sat up.**—The spirit is restored, and earthly life is renewed. The event teaches that no wasting away, no dissolution of the body, can prevent the restoration and continued existence of the exact individual. **He gave him to his mother.**—This is the fitting close. It was for her sake he had done the work.

16. And fear took hold on all.—Not terror, but silent amazement and reverential awe. There was great comfort and unspeakable hope in the very manifestation that excited their fear. And well might they say that a great Prophet had risen up, and that God had visited his people. Strange that in the storm of hostility that soon raged around him, any of them should have forgotten it!

CLUSTERING THOUGHTS.—1. Even the dead can obey Jesus, for when he commands he always gives the power to obey. 2. Why does not Jesus provide for the restoration of every precious life? Because he can not. All *must* die, the grave is the gateway to another world, and temporary restoration from the grave only postpones the inevitable. He only can give abiding comfort by giving a clear vision of life beyond the grave. 3. Jesus is always calling for souls to *arise*,—from gross sins to pure activities; from low planes of thought and feeling, to higher and holier fields. In a true sense heaven is always above. 4. To be full of goodness, full of cheerfulness, full of sympathy, full of helpful hope, causes a man to carry blessings of which he is himself as unconscious as a lamp is of its own shining. Such a one moves on human life as stars move on dark seas to bewildered mariners, or as a spring breeze which wakes the flowers.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Earnest Entreaty Answered. What was a centurion? How was this centurion in trouble? Whom did he send to Jesus? What argument did they use? What did Jesus proceed to do? What message did the centurion again send? Why had he not come himself at first? How does he express his confidence in Christ's power and authority? What did Jesus feel and say of his faith? In what condition was the sick servant found? **2. The Silent Appeal of Need.** To what city did Jesus go? Who went with him? What did he meet at the gate? What were the circumstances which made this funeral a particularly sad one? What was Christ's feeling? What did he say? What did he do? What were his words to the dead man? What effect did they have? What effect did the miracle have?

COLLECT.

O Father, bless thou our griefs, in that they bring us unto thee; and bless our sorrows, in that they bring thee unto us. Grant us the light to see thy mercy, the faith to appropriate thy love. Help us to know that he who lived still lives, that he who loved, still loves, that he who blessed, still waits to bless. Grant us this prayer, through Christ. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A GREAT FAITH.—1. *Note.*—The varying mental attitudes of the different characters. (1) The Jews plead for the centurion as *worthy*,—because he was friendly to the Jews. (2) The centurion represents himself as *unworthy*, but comes simply in humility and faith. (3) Christ now as always sees a human need and meets it as such, yet finds the petitioner indeed worthy—but because of his great faith.

2. We may learn from the centurion that,—(1) A man fit to command knows how to obey. True power brings true humility. (2) No position places a man beyond our kindness. The lofty in soul will be ever considerate of those who are low in the social scale, even those who are low in spiritual life. The slave, the sinner, is a brother in Christ. (3) A man may have such faith as will be marvelous in comparison with that of others. Christ is said to have marveled once also at great unbelief. Shall he marvel at our faith, or our unbelief?

3. How deeply rooted must unbelief be in our hearts when we are surprised to find our prayers are answered, instead of feeling sure that they will be so (*Hare*).

4. *Equal in God's Sight.*—It is related of the Duke of Wellington, that once when he remained to take sacrament at his parish church, a very poor old man went up the opposite aisle and knelt beside him. Some one came and touched the poor man on the shoulder and whispered to him to rise and wait for the duke. But the great commander clasped the old man's hand, and held him; and in a reverential undertone, but most distinctly, said: "Do not move, we are all equal here."

5. *It is Safe to be Humble.*—There is one thing to be said for humility, that it can never by any possibility do one harm. If a man goes through a door and has a habit of stooping his head, even if the door be very high, the stooping is no injury to him; whereas if the door happen to be a low one and he has the habit of holding a lofty head, he may be reminded that too much self-assurance is folly. A careful respect of one's surroundings, a kindly regard for one's associates, do by no means argue any meanness of spirit (*C. H. S.*).

II. A DEEP NEED.—1. The second miracle shows Christ,—(1) *Tender.* The mother's need was her only prayer. There was no other in word or thought. Christ pities and often without our asking, yet all the more should we come pleadingly, gratefully to one so compassionate. (2) *Triumphant.* He shows himself free from bondage to ceremonial law by touching the bier. He shows himself Lord of death by a brief command, which is immediately obeyed. The dead sat up. (3) *Considerate.* He delivers the life which is now so peculiarly his own, back to the lonely mother. Not every one was called to apostleship. Not every one to-day is called to set his life apart from other interests to the service of the Master. Every one is called to service, but for many it lies in the humblest of home duties, with the many small opportunities which even such a life may bring.

2. *Lessons for Us.*—(1) *To sympathize* with the sorrowing is Christ-like. (2) *Jesus touched the bier*, according to the traditions a defilement. That mattered not when he was doing a deed of mercy. The fearful sights of disease and immorality which our foreign missionaries must witness are enough to make the heart sick and the arm weak. Yet they may pass among them daily with growing strength of soul, because their purpose is fixed to remove the evil and uplift the fallen. They can say:

> "My strength is as the strength of ten,
> Because my heart is pure."

(3) *The silence of the writer* on some points is suggestive. There is no record of any revelation from one who came back from the dead.

> Be hushed, my soul! the veil of darkness lay
> Still drawn: thy Lord called back the voice departed,
> To spread his truth, to comfort his weak-hearted,
> Not to reveal the mysteries of its way.
> Oh, take that lesson home in silent faith,
> Put on submissive strength to meet, not question, death (*Mrs. Hemans*).

4. *A Great Desolation.*—Luke was said to be a painter. A word painter he truly was. How vividly with a few master strokes he brings out his pictures before us. This one is affecting in its simplicity. A widowed mother is following to the grave her only son. "To a mother in Israel the shock was embittered manifold; for to have a son was to have an interest in the Promised Seed; and to be without a son was to be cut off from that sweetest, noblest expectation."

5. *A Glad Restoration.*—O mother! mother! wast thou more favored than other mothers? Or was it that for the sake of other mothers as well as thyself, thou wast made the type of the universal mother with the dead son—the raising him but a foretaste of the one universal bliss of mothers with dead sons (*McDonald*).

"Weep not, O mother, sounds of lamentation;
Weep not, O widow, weep not hopelessly;
Strong is his arm, the bringer of salvation,
Strong is the word of God to comfort thee."

6. *Arise!*—If we suppose a man possessed of a magnificent house, luxuriously and tastefully furnished, who yet chooses never to ascend a stair, and lives in the basement meanly and shabbily, we might take him as the type of not a few sensual and bad men, who seem entirely at their ease. They live in the basement. They have thrown away the key to the upper rooms. They have lost all appreciation of the higher, better modes of human living, and they are contented and satisfied, as a well-fed beast is, in the absence of all spiritual cravings and aspirations. Life ever needs calling from a lower world to a higher (*Dr. Peabody*).

CHRIST CAN RESTORE RESCUE THE DEPARTED DISEASED

RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON.

LESSON VIII. FEBRUARY 23.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.
—Luke viii. 48.

FAITH ENCOURAGED.

Luke viii. 43-55.

Time.—Autumn, A. D. 28.
Place.—In and near Capernaum.

Geographical Notes.—Just previous to the working of the miracle in this lesson, Jesus and his disciples were on the opposite side of the lake, and as he came back in the boat the people were "waiting for him" (10). This waiting is accounted for by the fact that a boat with a sail can be seen across the lake, and when it was perceived that the boat in which Jesus had gone across was turned toward the westward shore again, the word could be spread about town, and the people gathered on the shore, before the clumsy boat could make its way across. The people gathered on the shore when they saw him coming, as they do in small towns on our navigable rivers when they see a steamboat coming in which they have some special interest. The afflicted woman heard of his coming, and so did Jairus, who was the first to claim his attention when he landed.

BOAT ON SEA OF GALILEE.

Connecting History.—After the raising of the widow's son, Jesus made a second tour of Galilee, during which he spoke those instructive parables recorded most fully in Matthew, thirteenth chapter. Returning, he crosses the Sea of Galilee, stilling one of its wildest storms, and stills, by a strange deliverance, the wilder breast of the demoniac of Gergesa. Returning to Capernaum, we come to the scene of to-day's lesson.

Christ's compassion was grand because it was always active. He pitied, and he at once helped; he sympathized, and he toiled to his utmost strength to relieve. You can not indulge in the luxury of feeling (if you will excuse a Lancashire metaphor), that you do not use to drive your spindles, without doing yourselves harm; it never was intended to be blown off as waste steam and allowed to vanish in the air. It is meant to be conserved and guided, and to have something done with it. People grow useless who merely weep over romances. Do not get into the habit of indulging in mere sentimental contemplation of Christian self-sacrifice, of missionaries, and heathenism (*Spurgeon*).

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither and could not be healed of any,

I. THE TOUCH OF FAITH.

EXPLANATORY.

43, 44. A woman . . . which could not be healed.—Christ is on the way to the house of the ruler of the synagogue whose only daughter lies dying. His closest disciples attend him, and the needy and the curious press about him. Most eager of all is a poor woman long afflicted with some obscure disease, an "intractable humor." Her case was indeed pitiable. All her living had been spent seeking a cure. "A little while before she might not have been so ready for the coming of Jesus. A

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Feb. 17.—Parable of the Sower (Luke viii. 1-15).
Tuesday, Feb. 18.—The Winds and Waves Obey (Luke viii. 16-25).
Wednesday, Feb. 19.—The Demoniac of Gadara (Luke viii. 26-39).
Thursday, Feb. 20.—A Suffering Woman; a Dying Child (Luke viii. 40-56).
Friday, Feb. 21.—Parable of the Tares (Matt. xiii. 24-43).
Saturday, Feb. 22.—(Ps. xxvii.).
Sunday, Feb. 23.—The Lesson in Mark (Mark v. 22-43).

44 Came behind *him,* (him,) and touched the border of his garment: and immediately (her) issue of (her) blood stanched.

45 And Jē'sus said, Who (is it that) touched me? (When) And when all denied, Peter (and they that were with him) said, (and they that were with) him, Master, the (multitude throng) multitudes press thee and (press) crush *thee,* and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 (And) But Jē'sus said, (Somebody hath touched) Some one did touch me: for I (perceive) perceived that virtue is (power had) gone (out of) forth from me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him (she) declared (unto him before) in the presence

portion of her income would have been left. The temptation would have been to try another doctor. But now there is only this chance. Her hope is born of the energy of despair. Like many another since, she is prepared to say,—

"Other helper have I none, thou must save, and thou alone."

Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment.—Perhaps there was superstition mixed, but this woman had faith in Jesus. She felt there was healing in him, and if she could but *touch* him, she would find it. Nay, the thought was rather on him who was touched. Matthew gives her expression (chapter xi. 21), "If I do but touch *his garment.*" If I do but touch *him!*

VARIOUS TOUCHES.—1. There is the unbeliever's touch, like that of the cruel hands which nailed him to the cross. Only judgment comes from this. 2. There is the cold touch of the critic. He may not be profane. He is cold, trying experiments. 3. There is the fashionable touch, which is much more common. Paying polite respect at the dictates of society. 4. There is the formalist's touch, where the "touch" is everything, and gets no farther! 5. There is the touch of indifference; people who will not be at the pains to be infidels, and who are not earnest enough in the matter of life to be Christians. . . . What the world wants is men and women who say, "I must have a helper. Others have found the help they need in Christ. I will get to him, and feel his power, too" (*Aitken*).

45, 46. Jesus said, Who is it that touched me?—The healing of the woman was as instant as her act. She was at once conscious of it, and so was Jesus. He proposed to have her disclose herself. Peter thinks it strange that he should ask such a question when so many are crowding and jostling against him. But Jesus knew that some one had touched him with more than a common touch. *Power* had gone out from him. Doubtless he gave from his own vitality in every act of healing, and in all that teaching that has inspired and lifted men. It is ever so. No preacher, no teacher can lift others unless virtue goes out of him; unless he vitalizes his words with his own soul and strength. No one can lift and comfort the world unless power *goes out of himself.* The best workers get very weary sometimes. The great problem before the Christian worker ever is,—how to draw more life from Christ, that we may give more to the world.

47, 48. When the woman saw that she was not hid.—Poor, timid woman! it was best that she disclose herself, for Christ had not only his silent healing, but gracious words for her!

Near him she stole, rank after rank;
She feared approach too loud;
She touched his garment's hem, and shrank
Back in the sheltering crowd.

A shame-faced gladness thrills her frame:
Her twelve years' fainting prayer
Is heard at last; she is the same
As other women there.

of all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard *it*, he Jesus hearing it, answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, only believe, and she shall be made whole.

She hears his voice; He looks about;
Ah! is it kind or good
To drag her secret sorrow out
Before that multitude?

"Daughter," He said, "be of good cheer;
Thy faith hath made thee whole,"
With plenteous love, not healing mere,
He would content her soul (*MacDonald*).

CHRIST RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

IL ANSWER TO HUMBLE PRAYER.

49. There cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house.—This ruler was Jairus (verse 41), and not unlikely he had charge of the very synagogue which the Roman centurion had built. If so, he must have known well of Jesus. As ruler, he was one of the elders of the synagogue, a body that directed its affairs, presided over its services, invited readers and speakers, and superintended its schools. His only daughter, a maid of twelve years, lay dying, and in his great grief he had come and thrown himself at Jesus' feet, and besought him to come and save her to him. He was now making his way through the throng to the ruler's home. **Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.**—Here was the end of the matter according to the views of the housekeepers. If Jesus had come while the spark of life remained, he might have healed. But now the struggle was over. Life was gone; its recall was unthinkable. And why should the Master be further troubled? Others whom he might benefit were needing his help. And, besides, he must be very weary.

50–53. Fear not: believe only.—Christ breathes his own assurance into the heart of the bereaved father. When the storm rages too high, he speaks, "Peace, be

51 And when he came (into / to) the house he suffered (no / not any) man to (go / enter) in, (with him, / ——) save Pe'ter, and (James, / John,) and (John, / James,) and the father (and the mother of the maiden. / of the maiden and her mother.)

52 And all (wept, / were weeping,) and (bewailed / bewailing) her: but he said, Weep not; (for / ——) she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 (And he put them all out, and took / But he, taking) her by the hand, (and / ——) called, saying, (Maid, / Maiden,) arise.

55 And her spirit (came again, / returned,) and she (arose straightway: / rose up immediately:) and he commanded (to give / that *something* be given) her (meat. / to eat.)

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still!" When he came to the house of the dead, he put the great crowd of sympathizing friends and officious mourners forth. He ever loved simplicity and quietude and genuineness. **He suffered not any man to enter in with him, save.**—In this exercise of power over death he wished only those present whose hearts were wholly with him. And when the stricken parents stood in the presence of the weeping, and their dead, he reassured their hearts again, saying,—**Weep not; for she is not dead but sleepeth.**—He did not mean that she was not what the world calls dead; but he did mean positively to say this, that death was to him as sleep. He could wake from death, as others from sleep.

54, 55. He, taking her by the hand.—This story is so gentle and natural that it speaks its own truth. Jesus takes the pale hand in his own, and says, "Dear child, arise." "And the words are instantly obeyed. Richer is this as a parable than as a mere piece of history. The fact is soon exhausted; the allegory is infinite. The voice is ever speaking, and resurrections are ever taking place. Lost joys are being recovered, and death gives place to life. Where Christ is there is no death, no loss; only changes from less life to more" (*P. C.*).

Eusebius, the historian, who wrote three centuries later, says the woman who was healed was Veronica, a woman of repute from Cæsarea Philippi. He leaves this strange record: "I, Eusebius, have seen her house in that city. And to this day before the gate of her house, on a lofty block of stone, there stands a brazen sculpture; on the one side a woman drops on her bended knee, with hands outstretched as in supplication; and opposite to her stands a man erect and tall, becomingly clad in a mantle, who extends his hand to the supplicant. At her feet there springs a certain strange plant which rises as high as the hem of her garment; it is held to be an antidote to all forms of disease. This they say is a statue of Jesus Christ."

POINTS TO NOTE. **1. A Silent Faith.** Who came to Jesus? With what request? For what reason? Who came to him for healing on the way? How did she approach him? Was she healed? What did Jesus ask? Was the woman probably the only one who had touched Jesus? How did her touch differ from the others? How did Jesus answer Peter's question? What did the woman do? In what words does Jesus set his seal upon her faith and cure? **2. A Limited Faith.** What message was brought to the ruler? How did Jesus encourage him to trust him further? Whom did he take with him into the house? What did Jesus say to the weeping company? How did they treat his words? By what act and word did Jesus recall the departed spirit? Did it obey? What did Christ command?

COLLECT. Our Heavenly Father, grant to us the secret of finding healing and comfort in Jesus. May we so touch his robe that his grace shall come to us; may it cleanse and make us strong. May we so see life that death shall truly be but sleep. We praise thee, that we thus can pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A RENEWED LIFE.—1. *A Cluster of Lessons.*—(1) When Jesus went on an important errand, he did not neglect the lesser opportunities which came in his way. (2) We may see an emblem of sin in the disease which had been "the consumption of the body and the purse," which had continued only to grow worse, and the only end of which was death. (3) The woman came unobserved. We may be alone with Christ in a crowd. He can understand and lift burdens of which no human friend knows. (4) No one can hide himself, or his deeds, from him. (5) Christ asks us to confess the blessings we receive from him. We should be willing to do it for the sake of others. (6) A second blessing will follow such confession. (7) Not thy *touch*, but thy *faith* hath made thee whole.

2. *The Touch of Faith.*—Curiosity presses, faith touches. One gains nothing, the other gains all. Multitudes still come similarly to the means of grace, but all to no purpose, being only sucked into the crowd (*Augustin*). "There is a difference between the touch of the crowd and the touch of faith. So men touch Christ in history. It is hard to walk through the avenues of human literature without touching him. But the touch of faith is what draws from him the saving power."

3. *The Use of Sorrow.*—The simplest and obvious use of sorrow is to remind of God. Jairus and the woman, like many others, came to Christ from a sense of want. It would seem that a certain shock is needed to bring us in contact with reality. We are not conscious of our breathing till obstruction makes it felt. We are not aware of the possession of a heart till some disease, some sudden joy, or sorrow, rouses it into extraordinary action. And we are not conscious of the mighty cravings of our half divine humanity; we are not aware of the God within us till some chasm yawns which must be filled, or till the rending asunder of our affections forces us to become fearfully conscious of a need (*F. W. Robertson*).

"Press close to him, close in thy weakness, nor harbor one thought of despair;
The Lord will have mercy upon thee, in love he will answer thy prayer."

4. *Confessing Christ.*—"I come, sir," said a business man, "to inquire if Jesus Christ will take me into the concern as a silent partner? I wish to be a member of the firm, but I do not wish anybody to know it." The reply was: "Christ takes no silent partners; the firm must be Jesus Christ & Co., and the names of the 'Co.,' though they may occupy a subordinate place, must all be written out on the sign board" (*Bib. Museum*).

II. A RESTORED LIFE.—1. *Voices of the Hour.*—(1) The voice of need. The ruler is forgotten in the father. Pericles was never seen to weep except when placing a wreath on the brow of his dead boy. (2) The voice of doubt. The messenger thinks that all is over. (3) The voice of comfort. Fear not. (4) The voice of mourning. A purchased grief. Crape and carriages. (5) The voice of rebuke. By one who knew the shallowness of their grief, and its uselessness. (6) The voice of scorn. Unrecognizing the presence in which they stood. (7) The voice of life. Uttered only in the presence of faith and love (*S. S. Journal*).

2. *Thoughts for To-day.*—(1) Why trouble ye the Master? It would be useless indeed to call in a physician after death, but not Christ.

"When earthly helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me."

(2) The unbelieving mourners laughed to scorn the words of Christ. Though we may not see the meaning of his sayings, we should not therefore despise them. (3) "Sleep is a short death; death a long sleep." Nearly all nations have agreed in speaking of death under the figure of sleep, but Christ gave it new meaning. It is not only a rest from toil, but it is the preparation for the waking into an eternal day. (4) Those who grieve have no right to indulge their feelings excessively. It shows lack of faith and perception of duty to the living. "Those who die of grief are not admirable characters. It is selfishness that kills them." (5) Christ did not rebuke real grief. Yet he said little, the sorely bruised heart can not bear much. A mistake is sometimes made

in the attempt to "cheer up" a sad heart. Let the cheer be Christ-like, sympathetic, unobtrusive.

If Jesus wept at Bethany, that sleep that soon had breaking,
Well may we weep who watch to-day, a sleep that knows no waking.

(6) The life which our souls had lost is restored by Christ. As he commanded food to be given the maiden, so the new spiritual life requires that which will make it strong.

3. *Jesus Cares.*—A black marble slab in the floor of the nave of Westminster Abbey bears this inscription: "Brought by faithful hands over land and sea, here rests David Livingstone, missionary, traveler, philanthropist." We know how the moldering body was tenderly preserved, borne with patient care across vast territories for nine months, conveyed thousands of miles across the ocean, and laid by an admiring nation in the place of highest honors. But what is this to Christ's care of the dust of his people? Not to bury them in honor, but to raise them in glory.

Alas, for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees!
Who has not learned in hours of faith
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own (*Whittier*).

4. *Jesus Knew What Sorrow Meant.*—It is worthy of remark that of the three persons whom our Lord raised from the dead, Lazarus was the loved and *only* brother of Martha and Mary; the young man was the *only* son of his mother; and this little maid was the *only* daughter of Jairus; so touched is he with our crushing griefs, so much regard does he show to relative affection (*Jay*).

5. *No Loss Like that of Children.*—We expect some time to lay our parents down; but the loss of children is unnatural. There is no ripening of relation, but an untimely and bitter rending. "I know now which is the sweetest verse in the Bible," said a mother coming from the grave of her baby boy; "it is, 'Suffer little children to come unto me.'" The only true comfort is the faith that "their angels" do keep them safely amid fairer scenes, "dear lambs of the upper fold!"

6. *What Withers on Earth May Bloom in Heaven.*—A delicate child, pale and prematurely wise, was complaining on a hot morning that the poor dew drops had been too hastily snatched away, and had not been allowed to linger and glisten on the flowers which fitted and loved them so well. "The sun," said the child, "has chased them away with his heat, or has swallowed them up in his wrath." A little later came rain, and a rainbow; whereupon his father pointed upwards. "See," said he, "there stand the dew drops, gloriously reset, a glittering jewelry—in the heavens. By this, my child, thou art taught that what withers on earth blooms again in heaven." Thus the father spoke, and knew not that he spoke prophetic words; for soon after, the dear and sparkling morning life was exhaled like a dew drop into heaven (*Richter*).

If We Touch Christ TOIL RIAL Will be SWEETENED SANCTIFIED

LESSON IX. MARCH 1.

GOLDEN TEXT.

This is my beloved Son: hear him.
—Luke ix. 35.

JESUS THE MESSIAH.

Luke ix. 18-27.

Time.—Summer, A. D. 29. **Place.**—Near Cæsarea Philippi.

Geographical Notes.—Luke makes no mention of the place where the conversation in this lesson took place, but Matthew and Mark both tell us that it was near Cæsarea Philippi. This city stood at the foot, or rather *on* the foot, of one of the outlying spurs of Mt. Hermon, and about twenty-six miles north of the lake of Galilee. A plain about five miles wide, with mountains rising from each side, and the Jordan flowing through the middle, extends almost all the way from the lake to the city. Jesus crossed to the northeastern curve of the lake, when he started for the place, passed through Bethsaida, Julias, on the eastern bank of the upper Jordan, and followed the plain just mentioned till he came near the city. (See Mark viii. 13, 22, 27.) Cæsarea is now a ruin, but its ancient wall can be traced, and in some places it is at its original height, or nearly so. The spring, which is one of the principal sources of the Jordan, breaks out from the foot of the cliff at its northeastern corner, and the stream from it runs close by the northern and western walls, and then, deflecting toward the west, joins two other small streams to form the upper Jordan. The scenery about Cæsarea is extremely varied and picturesque. At the time of the Saviour's visit the city had been recently enlarged and greatly improved by Herod Philip, and named Cæsarea, in honor of Cæsar and himself. More anciently its name had been Panias, and under Arab rule it regained its original name under the corrupt pronunciation, Banias, by which it is known among the natives of the country to this day.

Connecting History.—Considerable time has passed since the events of the last lesson. The twelve have been sent out to preach, John the Baptist has been slain, the multitudes in the wilderness have been fed, and many works of power have been wrought. Jesus, by his higher spiritual teaching (John vi. 51 66), has been sifting his followers; and his work in Galilee is now nearly done.

18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his praying alone, the disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say Who do the people multitudes say that I am?

19 They And they answering said, Jŏhn the Băp'tist; but some others *say*, E-lī'as; E-li'as; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE GOOD CONFESSION.

18. As he was praying alone. The popular enthusiasm for Jesus had largely died away; so plainly did he teach that he was not come to gratify earthly appetites and ambitions, that the multitude had left him to the "dear peace of a sad loneliness." It is true that "the soul may reach a height it can not keep," and it is also true that the soul may be called to heights it will not climb. Jesus had retired to a distance from the scenes of his busiest life; he was alone with his disciples. **Who do the multitudes say that I am?**—Jesus well knew what the world thought of him, but he wished his disciples also to know. The

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Feb. 24.—Feeding the Hungry (Luke ix. 1-17).
Tuesday, Feb. 25.—The Good Confession (Luke ix. 18-27).
Wednesday, Feb. 26.—The Transfiguration Luke ix. 28-36).
Thursday, Feb. 27.—Which Should be Greatest (Luke ix. 37-48).
Friday, Feb. 28.—"He Followeth Not with Us" (Luke ix. 49-62).
Saturday, Feb. 29. Thy Hand Shall Lead Me (Ps. cxxxix. 1-12).
Sunday, Mar. 1.—The Lesson in Matthew (Matt. xvi. 13-28).

20 He And he said unto them, But whom who say ye that I am? And Pē'ter answering said, The Christ of God.

21 And But he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing;
this to no man;

future work of the disciples would depend upon the condition of mankind, and that condition depended upon their attitude toward Christ.

19. They answering said, John the Baptist.—All men who came in contact with Jesus felt that he was a remarkable personage. The chief priests and rulers of the Jews never would have clamored for the crucifixion of an insignificant pretender. Men were willing to admit him to almost any place except the one place that he claimed. It is much so even now. Those who had lately heard of Jesus perhaps thought like Herod Antipas (chapter vi. 16), that John had reappeared in Jesus, since he seemed to carry forward his work. **Others say, Elijah.**—Elijah was looked for at the Messiah's coming (from Mal. iv. 5). And there was a general belief that at that time the old prophets were to reappear. Expectation was especially abundant concerning Jeremiah. "Popular tradition said that he had safely hidden the ark and the tabernacle and the altar of incense somewhere in the mountain where Moses died by the 'kiss of God.' Already had he appeared to the brave and patriotic Judas Maccabæus in a vision as a man gray haired and exceeding glorious, as one praying for the people as their guardian prophet" (*P. C.*). It was something that such estimate should be put on Jesus.

SOUTHERN GATE, CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

20. But who say ye that I am?—This is the first of questions, yet Jesus did not propound it hastily. He had never openly spoken of his Messiahship. It was his will that the revelation should dawn gradually on the minds of his children; that it should spring more from the life he lived and the truths he spoke, than from the wonders which he wrought. It was in the *Son of man* that they were to recognize the *Son of God* (*Farrar*). The time had come when those who were to be his disciples and ambassadors must have clear and positive conceptions and convictions in this matter. **Peter answering said, The Christ of God.**—The confession of Peter is the fundamental Christian confession of faith (*Lange*). The confession sees in Jesus not only the promised Messiah, the *one anointed*—prophet, priest, and king of humanity, but (Matt. xvi. 16) unites him with God, and makes him not only human, as we are, but divine, as God is. In regard to this confession, *note*,—1. That it is entirely independent of the world's judgment. 2. It is the expression of a personal faith. 3. This faith is the fruit of Divine teaching—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee" (Matt. xvi. 17). 4. The confession is the necessary outward expression of the heart's inward trust. To confess Christ we must seek to be like him, but we must also obey him, bearing his name, and uniting with his people to show forth his death until he come (*Rogers*).

21, 22. Commanded them to tell this to no man.—The time had not yet come for the full proclamation. He must show more of his spirit, and the world must show more of its spirit, before this final issue is made. Jesus had a clear understanding of what was before him. He saw, as heroes and martyrs have sometimes seen, that the best way finally to overcome a great wrong, or untruth, is to permit it to win a

22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, killed, and be raised the third day.
the third day be raised up.

23 And he said to them unto all, If any man will man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will would save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

present cruel victory. He saw the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. He saw the end, and could endure and wait.

II. SAVING LIFE BY LOSING IT.

23. If any man would come after me, let him deny himself.—A person can not live with Christ and for Christ, and at the same time think of self and live to gratify himself. There may be great joy in Christian service, but it is when one is lost in Christ. Dr. Cuyler says: It is not what a man takes up, but what he gives up, that makes him rich towards God. What ought a follower of Jesus to give up for his Master's sake? 1. Of course every man who would become a Christ's man would lay down every plain sin, must renounce everything that God's word and a healthy conscience set down as wrong. 2. We must give up whatever, by its direct influence, tends to injure ourselves or others. Here comes in the law of brotherly love. The safe side of all questionable amusements is the outside. 3. We must give up whatever tends to pamper the passion, or kindles unholy desires. It is true of almost every Christian that somewhere in his nature lies a weak point, a besetting tendency to sin; and just there must be applied the check-rein of self-denial. Even Paul waged a warfare with unholy bodily desires, and "kept them under." And eminent Christians have had to wage constant battles with hurtful lusts. Others have had a sore conflict with irritable, violent tempers. When a servant of Christ is willing to take a back seat, or to yield the pre-eminence to others, he is making a surrender which is well-pleasing to his meek and lowly Master. One of the hardest things to many a Christian is to serve his Saviour as a "private," when his pride tells him that he ought to wear a "shoulder strap" in Christ's army. 4. Another very hard thing for most persons to give up, is to give up having their own way. It is right here that self-sufficiency and vanity and waywardness and obstinacy are to be met; and the very essence of true spiritual obedience lies just here. 5. Finally, time, ease, and money, must all be held tributary to Christ. In these days of stylish equipage and social extravagance, how few are willing to call a halt, and end the competitions of fashion for Christ's sake! Too many go through the solemn farce of writing "Holiness to the Lord" on their property, and then using it utterly for their own gratification.

25 For what is a man advantaged, profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? or forfeit his own self?

26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come cometh in his own glory, and in his Father's, the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there There be some standing of them that stand here, which shall not in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

24. Whosoever would save his life shall lose it.—The spring that will not flow, dries up. The man who lives to and for himself, lives at length for a contemptible object. There is only one way to have any grandeur and beauty of character, only one way to save life; and that is—to live it for others, to give it away. A man grows mean by living a selfish and self-seeking life; verily he spoils and loses his soul. A man who forgets self, and lives for others, may not have much of some things, but he has the grandest treasure in the universe—a splendid self-hood, a noble soul. What difference is it what a man gains, if he forfeits *himself?*

26, 27. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me.—Christ will have reason to be ashamed of those who have been ashamed of him. Too often there is on their part,—1. A lack of a serious and a manly grasp on life. 2. A silly and superficial view of truth which deserves nobler treatment. 3. Under pretense of great boldness and independence oftentimes, a most cowardly subserviency to a malignant and scoffing world. It is a serious and shameful thing for a man to trifle, or play false, with truth and conscience. **When he cometh.**—As Christ begins to talk of his departure, he begins to speak of coming again. As he speaks of shame and sorrow, he speaks also of their conclusion. He will come to the earth again, in glory. **There be some of them that stand here.**—The "reign of Christ" in this world, the kingdom of God, was soon to come. It did come in spiritual might, in ever-increasing power, on the day of Pentecost (read Mark ix. 1; Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 8, and ii. 1-4). It came in fearful judgment, as against its Jewish opposers, in the destruction of Jerusalem, which some then living could behold.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Anointed of God. 18-22. What do we find Jesus doing? What does he ask his disciples? What is the answer? What is his second question? What answer does Peter make? What did Christ then command? What does he say of the Son of man? **2. The Accepted of Christ.** 23-27. How must a man come after Christ? What does Christ say of him who seeks to save his life? Of him who is willing to lose it? How does he compare the world and the soul of man? What feeling will Christ have for those who have been ashamed of him? When will this be? What final assurance does he give them?

COLLECT.

Help us, O God, to feel what thy Son come to earth doth mean to us. Help us to know what change of plan and purpose, what new associations and duties will come to us when we accept Jesus as the Christ, thy Son, our Saviour. But may we see the precious truth, the glorious hopes, the beauteous life he brings, and find our joy supreme in accepting and exalting him, the first on earth, in heaven, and in our hearts, for evermore. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE DECISIVE QUESTION.—Learn to answer rightly the most weighty inquiry of all, who the true Saviour of the world is, and thou shalt be well enlightened (*Mujus*). Benjamin Franklin made an experiment, one of the most daring ever made by mortal man. Seeing a cluster of thunder clouds hanging overhead, he let fly into their midst a kite to which there was a silk string, on which hung a metal key. He applied his knuckles to the key, and called forth sparks of wild lightning. There were clouds of opinion afloat respecting Jesus Christ; indeed, the thunder clouds were gathering fast. Everything seemed mist and haze, vagueness and uncertainty. Jesus flies a question into the midst of these dark clouds. What an answer will be called forth (*J. C. Jones*)? In the heart of the apostles the circuit is closed and the electric flash appears. "Will ye also go away?" "*To whom shall we go?*" "Who say ye that I am?" "*The Christ of God.*"

II. A TURNING POINT.—It was a turning point in the life of Christ and his disciples. They had been on the level of the suffering common life of humanity. Now begins the more definite ascent toward the summit of Calvary. The multitude dimly feel it, and many turn back. To the apostles after they have for the first time clearly declared their supreme faith in his Messiahship, he now reveals the path that lies before them. "A crucified Messiah as the world's Saviour has been the theme of many a blasphemous jest among men whose minds are incapable of perceiving the connection between a Saviour and salvation."

III. HE CAME SO LOW.—A city missionary was visiting one of the most degraded courts in London, when a woman said something like this to him: "You say you care for us and are anxious about us, but it is very easy for you to come from your clean, quiet home to visit us. Would you come and live in this court, expose yourself to all these evils, day by day, in order to lift us up?" There would have been no need for Christ to leave his heavenly throne merely to occupy an earthly one. He could win the hearts of suffering men only through suffering, and uplift the lowly only by humbling himself; to rescue doomed man he must even die. So must his followers be. Years after a legend tells how Peter lay in prison at Rome, and how with merely human aid he escaped. As he went along the way outside the walls of the city he met his Lord bearing a cross. Peter asked, "Lord, whither goest thou?" Jesus answered, "I go to Rome to be crucified afresh;" and the old man quickly saw the meaning of the Master's words. This time he would serve the cause of Jesus better by remaining in prison and bravely dying for his name (*Schaff*).

IV. THE CROSS IS A NECESSITY.—God had one Son on earth without sin, none without suffering (*Augustine*). "The spirit of willingness to sacrifice the lower life is indispensable to the preservation of the higher." Whosoever will save his life. . . . This is the verse which is said to have been the life motive of the devoted Catholic missionary, Francis Xavier. "We must not think to pass from the feast to heaven, to dance with the devil all day and sup with Christ at night, to fly to heaven with pleasant wings." Many sing of cross-bearing who know nothing of it; and there is a vast difference between the jeweled cross of pride and the rugged cross of pain. We bear crosses because the path of duty runs across the path of desire. It also runs hard against a wicked world, and has led men to crosses rough and real. Yet there is truth in the saying, the highest Christian bears the lightest cross.

V. DO NOT MAKE CROSSES FOR YOURSELF.—There is a current idea that it is a fine thing to go through self-imposed trials—to do what is disagreeable just because it is disagreeable. As it is noble to climb Alpine heights, not because the slightest good can come of your doing so, not because you have the faintest idea of what you are to do when you reach the summit; but just because it is difficult and dangerous to climb them, and most men would rather not. Some people seem to think that we are always to be finding out what we do n't like to do, and then doing it. Not so. We are to do our duty, bear the burden that needs to be borne. Then if we can love it, and rejoice in it, so much the better (*Boyd*). Christ did not die for the sake of dying, but to save the world; and he does not inculcate self-denial for the sake of self-denial, but for the sake of others (*Josiah Strong*). It may be a glad thing to bear a cross which God's hand

has laid upon one. In spite of his mercy there is a double weight upon one who bears a self-made cross, a double sorrow in a *useless* sacrifice.

"With my own hands I drove the nails, I sang a merry song,
And chose the stoutest wood I had, to build it firm and strong.
If I had guessed, if I had dreamed its weight was meant for me,
I should have built a lighter cross to bear up Calvary."

VI. "TILL THEY SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD."—It was not long before the glorious descent of power from on high came upon all the apostles. Many of Christ's followers were to see the early triumphs of the gospel which was now being unfolded to them alone. "The victorious progress of that new kingdom of Christ, which was destined to work the greatest of all changes on this earth, and be the grand pledge of his coming in glory." One at least, the beloved disciple, was to survive that capture of Jerusalem, and destruction of the temple which was to render impossible any literal fulfillment of the Mosaic law (*Canon Farrar*).

Before me lies a path unknown,
It may be tears, and pain and death;
Oh, speak the word that cheers and nerves,
Fight the good fight of faith (*H. Bonar*).

VII. SAFETY AND STRENGTH IN SELF-FORGETFULNESS.—Did you ever try to cross a stream, or walk some dangerous height, on a narrow plank? If you have, you know that it is to be done exactly by not thinking about it. If you begin looking down at the water, or at the depth, and thinking about it, and how you will get through with it, you are lost. Whereas if you are so occupied with something else as to forget self, and where you are, you cross over as surely as though there were no danger. Take the matter of *health:* One condition of keeping in good health is not to think about it, but to get engaged in wholesome, whole-souled, and well-ordered work. Think about your health, begin feeling your pulse, watching your symptoms, considering all the things that might possibly be the matter with you, and you may think yourself into illness. Physicians sometimes order change of scene, or climate, really to distract the mind, and break the patient's monotonous and debilitating thoughts of himself. If you want to be a *public speaker*, perhaps you have to begin your practicing for it by thinking about yourself; but you will never come to real eloquence and power until in some hour of impassioned feeling you learn at once and forever to lose yourself in the truth that you are speaking, or the plea that you are making. The physician may study medicine in order to earn his own living; but he will be a poor doctor who does not by and by become so interested in his work, and in trying to do good to his sick patients, that he constantly forgets himself. So with all the real excelling power in this life. The real power to do any worthy thing in the world depends on our loving that thing more than ourselves (*Herford*).

WHAT IS THE GAIN?

WEALTH	WORLDS
WHEN THE	WHEN THE
KEEPER IS DESTROYED	KING IS DEAD

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.
—Luke x. 27.

LESSON X. MARCH 8.

TRUE LOVE TO ONE'S NEIGHBOR.

Luke x. 25-37.

Time.—November, A. D. 29. **Place.**—The exact place can not be told. Jesus is on the road from the northern border of Samaria eastward across the Jordan into Perea, and thence southward toward Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—Whether the incident related in this parable is a real or an imaginary one, it accords perfectly with the locality in which the scene is laid; for the road from Jerusalem to Jericho has in all ages been more frequented by robbers than any other in Palestine. This is owing to the fact that it passes through the northern end of the range of desert mountains which flank the whole western shore of the Dead Sea, and extend seven or eight miles farther north than the head of that sea. Being a desert region, it is uninhabited, so that after passing Bethany, only two miles from Jerusalem, the tourist sees no human habitation on the road till he reaches Jericho, sixteen miles distant from Bethany. The descent is about 3,500 feet, the path is rough and stony, as well as very steep in many places, and good places for robbers to hide themselves near the road abound on both sides. At about half way the modern guides point out the spot where the man fell among robbers, but there are so many others just as suitable, and just as likely to have been the real spot, that very little attention should be given to their representations. Our own guide, when we reached the traditional spot, said to us: "Gentlemen, here is the place where the Good Samaritan fell among thieves!"

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

O chime of sweet Saint Charity,
Peal soon that Easter morn
When Christ for all shall risen be,
And in all hearts new-born!

That Pentecost when utterance clear
To all men shall be given,
When all can say *My Brother* here,
And hear *My Son* in heaven (*Lowell*)!

The desire for power in excess caused the angels to fall; the desire for knowledge in excess caused man to fall; but in charity there is no excess, neither can angel or man come in danger of it (*Bacon*).

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

I. A GREAT QUESTION.

EXPLANATORY.

25-28. A certain lawyer stood up.—This "doctor of theology" stood up to test Jesus. He asked a question serious in itself, and Jesus so treated it. "How can I please God, and make sure of eternal life?" Jesus asked what his Law says, and he quotes

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Mar. 2.—The Seventy Sent Forth (Luke x. 1-9).
Tuesday, Mar. 3.—He that Heareth You (Luke x. 10 16).
Wednesday, Mar. 4.—Blessed the Eyes that See (Luke x. 17-24).
Thursday, Mar. 5.—The Good Samaritan (Luke x. 25-37).
Friday, Mar. 6.—Choosing the Good Part (Luke x. 38-42).
Saturday, Mar. 7.—The New Law of Love (I. John iii. 13 24).
Sunday, Mar. 8.—Love, the First and the Last (I. Cor. xiii. 1 13).

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, (willing, desiring) to justify himself, said unto Jē'sus, And who is my neighbour?

30 (And Jesus answering, he is made an answer and) said, A certain (man went, man was going) down from Je-ru'sa-lĕm to Jĕr'ĭ-chō, and (he) fell among (thieves, robbers,) which (both) stripped him (of his raiment,) and (wounded *him*, beat him,) and departed, leaving (*him*, him) half dead.

HIGH PRIEST.

31 And by chance (there came down a certain priest, a certain priest was going down) that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

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well. God was to be loved with the whole heart; and one's neighbor should be regarded even as himself (Deut. vi. 15; Lev. xix. 18). Jesus' reply is one of aptness and dignity. He commends the answer, and adds, **This do, and thou shalt live.**—"Here is a sharp sword thrust." "Do"! The lawyer understands the doctrine very well. He is correct as to precept. Jesus drives home on practice.

29, 30. Who is my neighbor?—It is significant that, without being directly accused, the lawyer seeks to justify himself; and he makes a professional blunder in asking what it is his business to answer. The Old Testament was the legal text-book which it was his business to interpret. "He should have known what was the exact sense of every word in its contents; and Christ very courteously reminds him of this by putting himself into the place of a client, or pupil, and asking him to decide this point in due form" (*President Thompson*). Jesus states a case: **A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.**—This story was not far-fetched; it was likely to occur any day. The road spoken of was nearly twenty miles long, much of the way rough and wild in the extreme, and then, and until a very recent day, infested with merciless robbers. No intimation is given as to who the man was. Presumably he was a Jew; but whether he were or not, made no difference in the case as Christ was stating it. This man, "this sample of humanity," was cruelly "wronged, and wrecked, and left to die by the wayside."

II. NOT WHAT THEY SEEMED.

31, 32. By chance a certain priest was going down that way.—Jericho was a priestly city, where a very large number of priests resided. This priest had no excuse for haste. He was not going up to Jerusalem to render an appointed service; his service at the temple was over, and he was returning home. He saw the man despoiled and helpless, and took pains to go around him, keeping as far off as the ravine would permit. We need not seek to know all the motives of the priest; the simple and sufficient fact is that he saw a man who needed his care, and he would not lift a hand to help him. Nay, he would go *out* of his way to avoid giving help. **In like manner a Levite also.**—Priests and Levites are not the meanest people; the robbers were probably not in the least degree priestly; but to be very religious, and at the same time immoral or unsympathetic; to be at once conspicuously obsequious to God, and indifferent to man, is to be hatefully inconsistent.

"Not he who scorns the Saviour's yoke
Should wear his crown upon the heart."

32 And likewise / in like manner a Lē′vīte, also, when he was at / came to the place, came and looked on him, and / saw him, passed by on the other side.

LEVITE.

33 But a certain Sa-măr′ĭ-tan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, / was moved with compassion,

34 And went / came to him, / him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in / on them oil and wine, and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them / them to the host, and said, unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, I will repay thee.

33-35. But a certain Samaritan.—The original Samaritan stock was brought from the east and colonized in Palestine by the King of Assyria about the seventh century before Christ. Originally wholly idolators, they obtained some slight mixture of Jewish blood, and adopted the law of Moses, rejecting the prophets, and all other Jewish sacred books. They worshiped at Mt. Gerizim, where they once had a temple, holding the spot to be more sacred than that of the temple at Jerusalem. Beside a Samaritan, a Jew could regard an utter heathen with complacency. In proportion as he accepted the true faith, he was held to exalt idolatry, and to profane and degrade the law. Christ does not at all indorse the mistaken views of the Samaritan; he teaches, in his talk with the woman of Samaria (John iv. 22), that truth is with the Jew; but he does teach that a man with a correct profession may be false, and that a man who has been in some ways misled and mistaken may be a true man. **When he saw him he was moved with compassion.**—Without any special praise, Jesus' words are tender of this man. The help for others which Jesus commends,—1. Cares for the sick, suffering, and helpless, those neglected by the respectable. 2. Disregards danger; the robbers might return, sickness may be contagious. Christ even disregarded actual death. 3. Gives up ease and comfort; "set him on his own beast," and went afoot. 4. Bestows personal care; washing and binding wounds, and taking care at the inn. 5. Pays out his money, and stands pledged to do more (*Bishop Warren*). Compassionate sentiments are very well; they must come first. The help that is given as a matter of duty without outgoing of heart, will be worth little, and soon cease to flow; but the emotion that does not drive the wheels to action, and set to work to stanch the sorrows which move it, is worth still less. It hardens the heart, as all feeling unexpressed in action does. If the priest and Levite had gone up to the man, and said, "Ah, poor fellow, poor fellow! how sorry we are for you? somebody ought to come and help you!" and so had trudged on their way, they would have been worse than they are painted as being (*McLaren*).

SAMARITAN.

36, 37. Which of these three . . . proved neighbor?—The lawyer's question is turned round the other way. It is better to ask, "Whose neighbor am I?" than "Who is my neighbor?" The lawyer meant by the word "A person whom I am bound to love." He would doubtless have drawn the limit as narrow as possible. But Christ teaches that whoever needs what we can give is our neighbor. And there he leaves it (*McLaren*). There was only one answer to give; a hard answer

ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, (was proved) neighbour unto him that fell among the (thieves? robbers?)

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. (Then said Je'sus / And Je'sus said) unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

for the lawyer, but he gave it. He would not speak the hated name—Samaritan—but "he that showed mercy." **Go, and do thou likewise.**—The Samaritan wasted no needless sympathy, he shed no idle tears. There are wounds that may be dressed; he puts his own hand to the dressing of them. There is a life that may be saved; he sets himself to use every method by which it may be saved. He saw, he felt, he did,—the proper order in all true service. It is not those who will weep the readiest over the sorrow who will do the most to relieve it. Tears will fill the eye—should fill the eye—but the hand of active help will brush them away, that the eye may see more clearly what the hand has to do (*Hanna*).

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Question Answered. Who stood up and tempted Jesus? By what question? How did Jesus reply? In what words is the substance of the law given? What did Je[illegible]ay of this? **2. An Answer Illustrated.** Why does the lawyer question further? What does he ask? By what form of teaching does Jesus answer? What case does he suppose? Was the incident a common one? Who first saw the wounded man? What did he do? Who was next to pass that way? How did he act? Who came last? How did the Jews regard Samaritans? How did this Samaritan show true neighborly feeling? How far did his kindness extend? What question does Jesus finally ask the lawyer? How does he answer? What does Jesus tell him to do?

COLLECT.

We bless thee, our Father, for him who was on earth, an example of perfect compassion; who was, and is, and is to be, our own unfailing helper. May we live in his spirit. May our hearts be filled with thy love, our lips with gentle, helpful words, and our hands with kind, unselfish deeds. May those who see us take knowledge that we have been with Jesus; and may the common round and trivial task be lighted from an inner brightness, and so fulfilled by us as to bring glory to thee and blessing unto men. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. LIFE IS LAW.—We are not under "the law," but under grace; yet life is not without law. All things physical obey the great laws of nature. It is necessary for us to follow the laws of custom in order to maintain the harmony of our social life. Our mental and moral natures, too, must recognize the existence and force of law if we would keep in harmony with eternal truth. We have ceased slavishly to obey only because we have learned gloriously to fulfill. Quesnel says: "Jesus Christ refers us to the law of God, though he was truth itself. In vain do we seek after other lights and ways, besides those which we find there. It is the spirit of God who dictated the law and made it the rule of our life. It is injurious to him for us either not to study it, or to prefer the thoughts of man before it."

II. LAW IS LOVE.—Peter Bayles, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, wrote the whole Bible in so small a space that it could be inclosed in the shell of a common walnut. We have eternal life here condensed into a word. "Christ did not say 'obey'; he said the word that comes before obey; he said 'love.' The least bit of love will do more to make you keep the commandments than any amount of study, or resolve about them." Paul said: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Did you ever think what he meant by that? In those days men were working their passage to heaven by keeping the Ten Commandments, and the hundred and ten other commandments which they had manufactured out of them. Christ said, I will show you a more simple way. If you do one thing you will do these hundred and ten things without ever thinking about them. It is the rule for fulfilling all rules (*Drummond*).

III. LOVE ILLUSTRATED.—Christ agrees with the lawyer as to the letter of the law. Now arises the further question as to its interpretation. The lawyer evidently expects a definition. Christ makes an application. He shows his questioner not when another is neighbor to him, but when he is neighbor to another.

My Neighbor.—The Jewish teachers hold that when God commands, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," he excepts all Gentiles, for they are not our neighbors, but only those that are of our own nation and religion. If they saw a Gentile in danger of death, they felt under no obligation to save his life. Such wicked inferences did they draw from that holy covenant with which God had distinguished them, and by abusing it thus they had forfeited it; God justly took the forfeiture, and transferred covenant favors to the Gentile world, to whom they brutishly denied common favors (*Henry*).

"*Passed By.*"—"May God give to you," is a common expression of refusal to give to a beggar. "God help you," we say, when we can not, or will not, help. All misery we may not relieve; but we may hold compassion for all. Who can be tolerated in Paradise who is indifferent to his brother's sorrow?

> The poor too often turn away unheard
> From hearts that shut against them with a sound
> That will be heard in heaven (*Longfellow*).

"*Had Compassion.*"—He entered into the *feeling* of the afflicted man; his pain and loss became his own. Only he who shares in others' sorrows can truly share in others' joys. And he will be blind and deaf to the rapture of heaven, who does not heed the miseries of earth.

> Give to God, be not afraid, give in love, thou shalt be paid,
> Somewhere, somehow, it shall be, all will be returned to thee.

IV. LOVE MAY BE CULTIVATED.—There are two ways by which we may cultivate love: 1. By doing acts which love demands. It is God's merciful law that feelings are increased by acts done on principle. If a man has not the feeling which he feels he should have, let him not wait till the feeling comes. Let him act with such feeling as he has; with a cold heart, if he has not a warm one; it will grow warmer while he acts. You may love a man merely because you have done him benefits: so you became interested in him, till interest passed into anxiety, and anxiety into affection. You may acquire courtesy of feeling at last by cultivating courtesy of manner. The dignified politeness of the last century forced man into a kind of unselfishness in small things,

which the abrupter manners of to-day will never teach. And say what men will of rude sincerity, those old men of urbane manners were gentler and kinder at heart than we with our rude bluffness that repels the gentler feelings of others, and represses our own. Gentleness of manner has some influence on gentleness of heart. So it is in things spiritual. If you say, "I do this because I *ought* to do it," you may at length say, "I do this because I *love* to do it." 2. The second way of cultivating Christian love is by contemplating the love of God. You can not move the boat from within; you may obtain a purchase from without. God's love is the point from which to move the soul. Love believed in produces love in return; we can not love because we must. The human soul needs more to live with nature and revelation. Seeing God through nature, we admire him; through revelation, we love him (*F. W. R.*).

The soul doth shape itself unto its deed,
Thought grows from thought, and service leads to love;
And love to larger love for evermore.

THE BEST SACRIFICE IS SERVICE
COMPASSION
CHARITY

MODERN SAMARITANS.
[From Farrar's "Life of Christ."]

GOLDEN TEXT.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. —Luke xi. 9.

LESSON XI. MARCH 15.

TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER.

Luke xi. 1-13.

Time.—November, A. D. 29. **Place.**—On the journey to Jerusalem, beyond Jordan, in Perea probably.

Our Father in heaven, we hallow thy name;
May thy kingdom holy, on earth be the same;
Oh, give to us daily our portion of bread—
It is from thy bounty that all must be fed;
Forgive our transgressions; and teach us to know
That humble compassion that pardons each foe;
Keep us from temptation, from weakness and sin,
And thine be the glory forever. Amen.

CHRIST PRAYING.

1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

I. HOW TO PRAY.

EXPLANATORY.

1. As he was praying in a certain place.—Jesus was wont to retire a little apart from his disciples when he prayed. His attitude, perhaps the echoes of his voice, would show that he was in prayer. **Teach us to pray.**—Probably it was one of his later followers. He does not ask for a *form* of prayer, but doubtless the question was broad: In what spirit, to what end, in what manner, shall we pray? The scene and circumstance of this lesson (if we accept the apparent chronological order) are very different from those under which the Sermon on the Mount had been delivered several months before; and to a new company of hearers Jesus repeats essentially that succession of significant sentences that contain his ideas of prayer. **Even as John also taught.**—We have no other intimation that John gave his followers especial instruction in regard to prayer. John plainly gave higher ideas, and lifted up a deepened devotion.

2-4. When ye pray, say.—The prayer divides itself into parts:

I. ADDRESS AND ADORATION,—**Father, hallowed be thy name.**—In the right spirit must we come; child-like, humble, pure and peaceful, reverent. "I used to think the Lord's Prayer was a short prayer; but as I live longer, and see more of life, I begin to believe there is no such thing as getting through it. If a man, in praying that prayer, were to be stopped by every word until he had thoroughly prayed it, it would take him a lifetime.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Mar. 9.—Teaching to Pray (Luke xi. 1-13).
Tuesday, Mar. 10.—A Kingdom Divided (Luke xi. 14-26).
Wednesday, Mar. 11.—Seeking a Sign (Luke xi. 27-32).
Thursday, Mar. 12.—The Pure and Sincere Eye (Luke xi. 33-36).
Friday, Mar. 13.—"These Ought Ye to Have Done" (Luke xi. 37-44).
Saturday, Mar. 14.—"Ye Took Away the Key of Knowledge" (Luke xi. 45-54).
Sunday, Mar. 15.—The Prayer in Matthew (Matt. vi. 5-14).

4 And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead bring us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil,

'Our Father'! Men might say, our Incomprehensible Ruler, our All-powerful King, or even our All-wise Creator; but our *Father*—why a man is well on the road to sainthood who can say that" (*Beecher*). God in his power and care and love is everywhere, but when we pray we address him enthroned. The brow and the heart must be lifted up—toward heaven. "Why do we say, 'Who art in heaven,' since God is everywhere?" asked a minister of a company of children. A drummer boy modestly, but firmly, spoke: "Because it is headquarters, sir." A large purpose in the ritualism of the Old Testament was to teach men the *holiness of God*. It elevates and refines the soul to sanctify God. Men usually have a sort of conceit in irreverence or profanity; but it brings the soul low.

II. FIRST PETITION,—**Thy kingdom come.**—The reign of heaven here on earth. This implies that God's will shall be done, as in heaven. Christ's kingdom was set up on this earth on the day of Pentecost, but this prayer seems to embrace more than that. It is a prayer for the full coming; a time when Christ shall—

here triumphant reign.
Enthroned in every breast;

when, indeed, sin and sorrow and sighing shall be passed away. "Here is a step higher. Reverence recognizes the majesty of God; loyalty his authority. We might revere a foreign king; we are loyal only to our own. Many are able to feel the former sentiment, who are apparently uninfluenced by the latter. They go in crowds to worship, but they never go truly to serve" (*Ludlow*). He who truly prays this prayer will not only seek to do God's will, but to cause it to be done. He will evangelize. Systematic and perpetual should be our study of the Bible, the world's mighty text-book. Matthew Arnold says that conduct is three-fourths of life, and that the Bible, far above all other books, is the book of conduct. If we truly pray, "Thy kingdom come," we shall search the Scriptures to help us to know day by day what we should be doing (*Gladden*).

II. SECOND PETITION,—**Give us day by day our daily bread.**—There are people who regard the Christian religion as visionary, a matter that lies outside the circle of the actual; a something beyond and apart from the ordinary acts and experiences of life! Yet here it is! a thing of the pantry and the pocket, mingled and wrapped up with pardon and paradise. It is a golden ladder, this religion of Jesus, bright with the vision of angels, its top among the stars, and resting hard by the throne of God. And yet it is set upon earth amid tools and toil, business and bread. The prayer is not, "Give me this day somebody else's bread, give us bread anyhow, from any quarter"; but give us *our* bread; bread that has fairly and honestly become ours (*Wray*). The prayer, too, is nobly inclusive: not *my* bread, but *our* bread. Jesus would have us remember the poor, and link our fellow men to ourselves. The Jews have a proverb, "He that prays for another is heard for himself." He that is generous calls down the liberality of heaven." Observe what it is that we are to pray for. Not bread for to-morrow, but for to-day. Not for delicate food, or fine clothes, or a grand house, but for bread; all things that are really needful for our bodies (*Hare*).

IV. THIRD PETITION,—**And forgive us our sins.**—At this point we get the first use of the conjunction, and there is significance and beauty in the word *and*. A man who had bread—simply the comforts of this life—would be a poor creature indeed. It is quite right we should pray for bread, but there must be joined some prayer for a spiritual blessing (*Coley*). **For we ourselves also forgive.**—We stultify ourselves if we ask our Heavenly Father to extend a measure of forgiveness to us which we deny our brother. Such a prayer is mockery, and we know that it is when we ask it. What is more, we can not receive the fullness of the divine forgiveness until we ourselves are ready freely to forgive. You say that the desert is a desert because no rain falls on it;

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I can not rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise arise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

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but that is only half the truth. No rain falls upon it because it is a desert. The heated air rushing up from its arid surface disperses the vapors that would descend in rain. Some moisture there must be on the earth, else there can not be rain from heaven. So only to the heart of forgiving disposition can descend forgiving grace. The pardon may wait in the sky above you, but it can not descend to you until the mind of Christ Jesus is ever in you (*Gladden*).

V. FOURTH PETITION.—**And bring us not into temptation.**—This petition recognizes the fact that every man has his weakness and limitations, and that it is safer for him to be surrounded with good influences than with sin; it asks that God will lead us in the paths where least danger is—of course so far as is consistent with duty. People talk about seeing the world, and getting their eyes opened, and all that; but do you see just as much of the good of the world as you can, and just as little of the evil. There is one kind of ignorance you need never blush for, it is an honor to you—the names and arts of vice and shame (*G.*). In a certain cave in Italy a man with his head erect will walk in safety, while the dog at his side will breathe the "choke-damp," which lies as a level lake at the bottom, and will die. A man whose head is high above a given temptation may venture into its presence. But no man carries a head high above every temptation.

II. CONTINUANCE IN PRAYER.

5-8. Which of you shall have a friend.—The picture here drawn is not unnatural. In the hot eastern climate it is not unusual to rest by day and travel by night. A voice is heard under a neighbor's window in the midnight hour—"Friend, friend! lend me three loaves! A friend has just come wearied and hungry, and I have no bread." The man addressed turns wearily, and gruffly says, "I can't accommodate you, don't trouble me; it is dark, and I don't wish to disturb my family." But there is no other or better place to go to, and the petitioner has no resource in himself; in his anxiety and need he can not be silent. And at last the man says, "Well, it is evident that if I am to have any rest to-night, I must get him the bread." And so he supplies him. The point of the lesson is not in the comparison, but in the contrast. If a drowsy and selfish man hears a persistent petitioner, much more will an all-watchful and benevolent Heavenly Father hear the soul that, conscious of its need, cries unto him.

9-13. Ask, and it shall be given you.—"Ask," "seek," "knock." These words imply different degrees of intensity. *Ask* with the humility of a beggar, *seek* with the carefulness of a good servant, and *knock* with the confidence of a friend (*Quesnel*). There are conditions, of necessity, to all acceptable prayer. A willful, or selfish, or ignorant and hurtful prayer, could not be answered. But the humble prayer,

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will
And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or *if he ask* a fish, will and he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if *if* he shall ask an egg, will he offer give him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

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intelligent with true faith, and sweet with the spirit of Christ, will get some answer. Why do we need to pray at all? Can love that waits to be asked be perfect love? Three thoughts may help us a little: 1. Prayer distinctly recognizes the sovereign freedom of the human will. There could be no prayer at all without it. 2. Again, prayer at least implies some sympathy with the will of God. Sometimes telegraphic communication is interrupted between Europe and America; some defect is in the wire, some fault in the cable itself. So there may be faults in the will which forbids God's free communication with us. Mr. Moody says: "People often pray with a faith that has no warrant, and of course such prayers are unanswered. If I were to go against Midian with three hundred men with empty pitchers, I should probably be routed. Gideon had a warrant. He went by the revealed will of God." 3. Prayer is not all petition; and whether we understand the mystery of it or not, there is something in prayer, apart from the direct answers which God gives, which justifies it. A great thinker once said: "I have conquered all my doubts, not with my books, but on my knees." I could almost put the law of prayer into a single sentence: Much prayer, much blessing; little prayer, little blessing; no prayer, no blessing (*Barrett*). **Shall his son ask a loaf?**—The point of this lesson is in its comparison: If earthly parents, with all their faults and frailties, will not mock and deceive their children—will not permit even their mistaken petitions to work them harm; much more will the Heavenly Father see to it that children who come to him and lean upon his Fatherhood shall never find their trust in vain.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. What to Pray. What request did one of Jesus' disciples make? How did he teach them to address God? What did he make the first petition? What should be our prayer concerning God's kingdom? His will? What petition comprehends our physical needs? On what grounds may we ask forgiveness? How should we seek to be led? From what delivered? **2. How to Pray.** What request does he suppose a man to make of his neighbor? For what reason? What does the neighbor answer? Will he finally yield? Why? On what condition may we hope to have anything given us? How shall we find? To whom will a door open? **3. What to Expect.** What is the promise to those who ask, seek, knock? What will a father not give when a son asks bread? Though evil, what does the human father give? What will the Heavenly Father give? To whom?

COLLECT.

Our Father: may thy will be done in all the world; especially help that it be done in our own hearts. As we need thy forgiveness, O do thou grant it; but help us to grow away from our sins and transgressions, that we may less offend against thee. Give us the bread we need this day, and bless it to us as a present gift. And may our daily paths not lie where sore temptations fall, and evil influences are; but may we find, as we shall need, holy companionship, and heavenly airs that help us home to thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

1. THE POWER OF PROPER EXPRESSION.—In an eastern city, Edwin Booth, the great tragedian, was once invited to dinner by an urbane old gentleman who deprecated the stage. Before the company broke up Mr. Booth was asked to repeat the Lord's Prayer. All eyes were fixed upon him as he slowly and reverently rose from his chair, trembling with the burden of two great conceptions. He had to realize the character, attributes, and presence of the Almighty Being he was to address; he was to transform himself into a poor, sinning, stumbling, benighted, needy supplicant, offering homage, asking bread, pardon, light, and guidance. Says one of the company present: It was wonderful to watch the play of emotions that convulsed his countenance. He became deadly pale, and his eyes, turned tremblingly upwards, were wet with tears. As yet he had not spoken. The silence could be felt; it had become absolutely painful, until at last the spell was broken as if by an electric shock, as from white lips he syllabled forth the prayer, beginning, "Our Father, which art in heaven," with a pathos, and fervid solemnity that thrilled all hearts. He finished; the silence continued, until a subdued sob was heard, and the host, with streaming eyes and tottering frame came forward and said, "I am an old man, and every day from boyhood to the present time, I thought I had repeated the Lord's Prayer; but I never heard it before—never." "And I," said Booth, "have labored for thirty years to repeat it, and with all too poor success."

2. NO PRAYER FOR LUXURIES.—A large provision for so short a voyage as life, is a perplexity, not a help; a burden and not a supply. We ask from God not luxuries, but necessaries. One of the sins that called down the terrific bolt of the French Revolution was that prodigal luxury of the nobility and court which dared to run to all excesses of riot, amid a famishing people, and with a bankrupt exchequer, with the selfish cry, "After us, the deluge." It came for *them* (*Williams*).

3. Four things which are not in the treasury

> I lay before thee, Lord, with this petition:
> My nothingness, my wants,
> My sins, and my contrition (*Southey*).

4. FORGETTING AND FORGIVING.—Bismarck was once asked by Count Enzenberg to write something in his album. The page on which he was to write contained the autographs of Guizot and Thiers. The former had written, "I have learned in my long life two rules of prudence. The first is, to forgive much; the second is, never to forget." Under this Thiers had said, "A little forgetting would not detract from the sincerity of the forgiveness." Bismarck added, "As for me, I have learned to forget much, and to ask to be forgiven much."

5. PRAYER THOUGHTS.—Words add more force to our inward devotion; they stir up and increase the affection of the heart. As the beams of the sun wax hotter by reflection, so do the desires of the heart by expression (*Rogers*). To pray *together*, in whatever tongue or ritual, is the most tender brotherhood of hope and sympathy that men can contract in this life (*Madame de Stael*). Men said, "We want a railroad into Italy, and can go no further for this vast mountain. How shall we find a way?" Heaven answered, "There is no way, except to your persistency; but if you seek, you shall find; if you knock, it will be opened unto you." And men did seek and survey, and they knocked with uncounted blows of hard steel on the face and into the heart of the mountain. Now the locomotive thunders through; the door is opened.

6. "NOT INTO TEMPTATION."—It is said at the battle of Waterloo a wealthy merchant of Brussels, who had been allowed access to headquarters, asked Wellington whether he was not exposing his person to great danger, as shot and shell were falling around. The great general replied, "You have no business here, but I am performing my duty." So let us never go into spiritual danger from idle curiosity, but only when duty calls; then, and then alone, may we expect to be safe (*Newman Hall*).

7. THE PRAYER THAT REACHES HEAVEN.—Prayer is the bow, the promise is the arrow, faith is the hand which draws the bow, and sends the arrow with the heart's

message to heaven. The bow without the arrow is of no use, neither the arrow without the bow, and both without the strength of the hand to no purpose. Neither the promise without the prayer, nor prayer without the promise, nor both without faith avail anything. The Israelites "could not enter in because of unbelief." The same may be said of many of our prayers, they can not enter heaven because they are not put up in faith (*Salter*). If we were more child-like, if we had the intuitions of the pure and simple-hearted, how much nearer heaven we would be!

"Every inmost aspiration is God's angel undefiled!
And in every 'O my Father,' slumbers deep a 'Here, my child'!"

8. A PLAN AND PLACE FOR PRAYER.—Prayer is not designed to inform God, but to give man a sight of his own poverty, to humble his heart, to excite his desire, to inflame his faith, to animate his hope, to raise his soul toward heaven; and to put him in mind that *there* is his Father, his country, his inheritance (*Quesnel*). Every soul needs a sanctuary. Sometimes to go and be *alone* with God and Christ in the fellowship of the Spirit, just for the joy and blessedness of it; to bow, it may be, in silent adoration, our very attitude an act of homage; to have our set day—hours of close communion to which we have to look forward with a living gladness, and on which we look back with satisfaction and peace; a season to which toil and sociability must give way, and when we do not hasten—this is prayer. And how such prayer will brighten and sweeten the world (*Thorold*).

9. "YE SHALL RECEIVE."—When Cæsar once gave a man a great reward, he exclaimed, "This is too great a gift for me to receive." "But," said Cæsar, "it is not too great a gift for me to give." So the smallest promise is too much for thee to deserve, yet the most magnificent promise is not too great for the King of kings to bestow. God scorns to act meanly and stingily by his children; and how must he scorn us often when we put him off with such contemptible stinginess of deeds, or donations (*Spurgeon*). His giving is limited, not by his lack of power, but by our welfare and our ability to receive. Every child wants all the pleasant things it sees. Every boy wants a fortune. And we! Ah! it is not best that all our desires shall be granted. Yet God does richly answer us.

10. "FOR WE FORGIVE."—John Wesley, on the way to America, heard an unusual commotion in the cabin of General Oglethorpe, with whom he sailed, and stepped in to inquire the cause. The general said, "Mr. Wesley, you must excuse me. I have met with a provocation too great for man to bear. You know the only wine I ever drink is Cyprus wine; I therefore provide myself with several dozen of it, but Grimaldi [his valet] has drunk up the whole of it. I have ordered him to be tied hand and foot, and carried to the man-of-war which sails with us. The rascal should have taken care how he used me so, for I never forgive." "Then I hope, sir," said Mr. Wesley, looking calmly at him, "that you never sin." The general was quite confounded; and putting his hand into his pocket, took out a bunch of keys which he threw at Grimaldi. "There, villain," said he, "take my keys, and behave better for the future" (*Bib. Ill.*).

11. WE MUST HAVE FORGIVENESS.—A debt is never ended until it is either paid, or pardoned. There is nothing but forgiveness can give ease to a troubled conscience. There is a great difference between having the fancy pleased, and having the conscience eased. Suppose a man has a thorn in his foot which puts him in pain; let him anoint it, or wrap it up; yet till the thorn is plucked out, it aches and swells, and he hath no ease. So when the thorn of sin is gotten into a man's conscience, there is no ease till the thorn be pulled out. To repent and be forgiven, the soul hath never ease without (*Watson*).

PRAYER MOULDS THE HUMAN HEART
MOVES HIGHEST HEAVEN

GOLDEN TEXT.

Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.
—Eph. v. 18.

LESSON XII. MARCH 22.

FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS.

Luke xii. 37-48.

Time.—Spring, A. D. 30. **Place.**—Near Jerusalem.

All persons possessing any portion of power ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust, and that they are to account for their conduct of that trust to the one great Master, Author, and Founder of Society (*Burke*).

Some day Worth shall claim his own,
Some day Right ascend his throne,
Some day hidden Truth be known;
Some sweet day (*Bates*).

37 Blessed [are] those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them [to] sit down to meat, and [will] come [forth] and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, [or come] and if] in the third [watch], and find *them* so, blessed are those [servants, servants].

39 And this know, [But know this,] that if the [goodman] master] of the house had known in what hour the thief [would come, was coming,] he would have watched, and not have [suffered] left] his house to be broken through.

L DUTY OF WATCHFULNESS.

EXPLANATORY.

37. Blessed are those servants.—Jesus has just been speaking of servants who keep the home while the master was gone to a wedding feast. About what hour he would return was all uncertain; but the good servant would have the lamps bright, and be ready at once to open the door and give a cheery welcome. Such a greeting would insure from the good master a grateful response. As the servants had cared for him, he would care for them. **He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat.**—As they had waited and watched while he feasted, he would serve while they were refreshed.

Not ease and pleasure first, then toil and care,
But toil and care, and then the endless rest;
'T is better so.

38. If he shall come in the second watch.—The Romans divided the night into four watches of three hours each. The Jews divided the night into three watches; the first from sunset to 10 P. M.; the second from 10 to 2 A. M., and the third from that hour till sunrise. The later the coming of the master, and the longer the watching of the servants, the greater their reward.

It may be weary, but 'tis joy to watch.
The night is long, but morn is coming on.
We live expectant; else we would not live.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Mar. 16.—Charge to the Disciples (Luke xii. 1-12).
Tuesday, Mar. 17.—A Foolish Rich Man (Luke xii. 13-21).
Wednesday, Mar. 18.—Be Not Anxious (Luke xii. 22-34).
Thursday, Mar. 19.—Watch (Luke xii. 35-48).
Friday, Mar. 20.—A Fire Upon the Earth (Luke xii. 49-59).
Saturday, Mar. 21.—Be Sober Unto Prayer (I. Pet. iv. 1-11).
Sunday, Mar. 22. The Lesson in Mark (Mark xiii. 28-37).

40 Be ye therefore/also ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour/in an hour that ye think not the
when ye think not.
Son of man cometh.

41 Then/And Pē'ter said, unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to/unto all?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that/the faithful and wise steward, whom his/his lord shall make ruler/set over his household, to give them their/them their portion of meat/food in due season?

43 Blessed is/is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

39, 40. If the master of the house had known.—The houses in the east are often built of loose stones, or sun-dried bricks, or clay, and can literally be dug or broken through. If the house owner had known about the hour when the thief would come, he would have been ready for him. He should have been reasonably alert and guarded all the while. The intentness of our watch should be proportioned to the importance of the event.

> "Let thy alertness and fidelity
> According to thy duty and thy danger be."

Be ye also ready.—To be ready is success; to be unprepared is failure. To be ready is salvation; to be unready, destruction. Noah was prepared for the flood, and was saved; his fellow men were unprepared, and lost. The ship that is ready for the storm weathers it; the ship unprepared goes down. The business that is prepared for a panic will go through; the one caught napping will fail. To be ready for the coming of Christ, or death, justly takes away all despair, and insures salvation; to be unprepared is to be lost. Yet how many mortals know and feel that they are not ready, but propose at some convenient season, in the future, to prepare (*Johnson*). What is meant by the coming of the Son of man? As generally and prophetically used by our Lord and his apostles, it means the judicial reappearance of the Messiah in a twofold sense: 1. At the downfall of Jerusalem, and the consequent breaking up of the Jewish power. 2. At the end of the world, and the final determination of the destinies of all human beings. These two thoughts are somewhat intermingled, but are never confounded. And one prefigures the other (*Strong*).

II. DUTY OF FIDELITY.

41-44. Speakest thou this parable unto us?—Peter perhaps had in mind the teaching of Matt. xiii. 10, 11; and he would also know whether the application were especially to the present band of disciples, or to all men. Jesus leaves the application general. **Who is the faithful and wise steward?**—One who has a position of trust, or oversight, is here referred to. Every disciple is given some trust, hence all are embraced. In an especial sense it bears upon all who have official positions and authority. Leaders in church and Sunday-school have especial responsibilities. To guide wisely and faithfully, to keep wholesome influences at work, to provide food—real *food*, and in *due season*, this is a high task; but it brings rich reward. **Blessed is that servant.**—Yes, blessed *is*. The man who does good deeds for earthly reward and the praises of men, may over and over be disappointed and sick at heart. But he who serves in unselfish fidelity in love of his Lord, will never fail of some harvest of joy.

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP.—Spurgeon says: Did you never read Henry Martyn's life,—a polished scholar, a man of learning and repute, giving up all for Christ to go to Persia, and there to die without having seen a convert perhaps; yet content to live, content to die, for his Master's sake? And Eliot, living in forests and giving his life to the Indians, and in feeble old age teaching a poor black child its letters and thanking God he could do even that much? And Francis Xavier, papist as he was? How grand

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will (make, set) him (ruler) over all that he hath.

45 But (and) if that servant (shall) say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and (maidens, the maidservants,) and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 The lord of that servant (will, shall) come in a day when he (looketh, expecteth) not, (for *him,*) and (at, in) an hour when he (is, knoweth) not, (aware,) and (will, shall) cut him (in sunder, asunder,) and (will) appoint (him) his portion with the (unbelievers, unfaithful.)

47 And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and (prepared, made) not (*himself,* neither ready, nor) did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes;*

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his consecration! He braved a thousand dangers, daring remotest seas and lands ever seeming to say—

O winds,
Blow east, blow west, blow north, blow south,
But bear me where the cross is not!

How such devotion shames our poor stewardship! **He shall set him over all that he hath.**—This reward is after the Lord comes; it is no promise of earthly promotion. How can *all* the faithful ones be ruler over *all?* Just as each saint can possess all things (I. Cor. iii. 22). The heavenly fellowship is perfect, and each enjoys to the full the honor and blessing of every other.

45–48. If that servant shall say . . . my Lord delayeth.—He plays false. He abandons the thought of accountability. He disbelieves in the return of his lord; and all evil doing grows out of unbelief. **Shall begin to beat the menservants.**—In Matthew (xxiv. 49) the reading is *fellow servants.* In high or low degree, all are still on the same footing—fellow servants. It is very common for those in power to oppress those who are weaker. "Men oppress, repress, and suppress their fellows." Men have not sought to share, but to monopolize, the good things of this life. And so, "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Let those given any authority, or power, beware lest they abuse it. **And shall eat and drink with the drunken.**—Another besetting sin of those in place and power is self-indulgence. "Gold covers more vice than the world knows of; and it is hard for most men to deny themselves of self-gratification which it is easy to obtain." "Three sins are laid at the door of this evil servant: Unbelief, pride, and pleasure seeking. There have been periods in the history of the church on earth when this was but a faint picture of its condition" (*S. S. J.*). **The lord of that servant shall come.**—He shall be called to account suddenly. If he beholds not the majesty of the second coming, death will take him to the presence of his Lord. Every one *must* give account of his treatment of his fellow men, and his use of life. Justice demands it. And, as between men, at least even love demands justice. **And he shall cut him asunder.**—An ancient mode of punishment (Heb. xi. 37); but the idea here is of a severe punishment, for the guilty soul is to have a living grief with hypocrites. **That servant which knew his lord's will.**—Jesus again lays down the law that responsibility varies according to opportunity; and that there is gradation in punishment. There is a difference that may be vast between an ignorant transgressor, and one that is knowing and willful. The heart must be taken into account in measuring conduct. When that is done, every one shall receive according as his works shall be. **To whomsoever much is given.**—Those who hold the larger number of talents are required to make the larger returns. This ought to be a universal rule. We are forever to give proper tribute, as we have received.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much much be required: and to whom men they have committed commit much, of him they will will they ask the more.

This applies to the conscience of all men. Knill, the missionary, was one day talking to some military officers in Madras, when one of them asked: "What do you missionaries mean? Do you think that poor black fellow will be damned?" "I hope not," replied Knill, "but if he is, I think his punishment will be very light compared with yours, if you neglect God." The words so struck home that the officer started, and said: "I believe it; I have long thought so."

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Watching. Whom does Christ here call blessed? How will their lord treat such servants? What periods of the night are here mentioned? What might a house owner have saved by watching? What lesson does this teach believers? **2. Working.** What did Peter ask? What question did Christ put to him in return? What is the steward's duty? Doing what will he be blessed? What will be his reward? **3. Disobeying.** What may the servant say in his heart? How neglect his duty? What will be his fate? What is said of the punishment of one who knows his Lord's will, and sins? Of him who does not know? Of whom will much be required?

COLLECT.

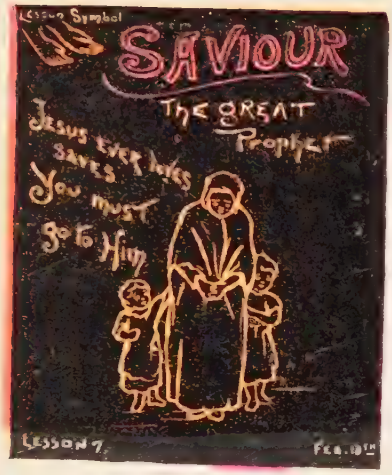
Heavenly Father, teach us to watch and pray, to the end that we may overcome evil, and establish righteousness, in our own hearts, and in all the world. May every power be fruitful, and every gift of thine be blessed in our hands. And while we come far short of what we might have done, or been, may our lives make this world fairer, and meet thy acceptance at last. We humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

BE NOT FALSELY SECURE.

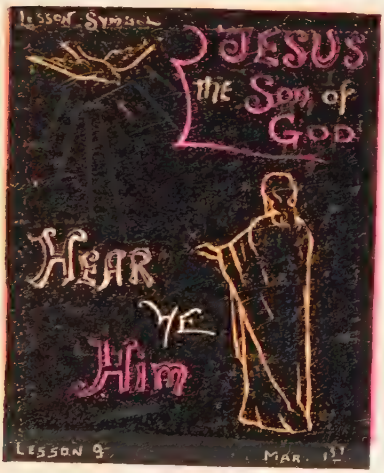
Do not thou, like a fortified town, because thou art victualed for many months, presume upon thy strength, as if thou couldst hold out a siege against all necessities; like the rich man in the gospel, who, having filled his barns and storehouses, bade his soul be at ease. Know that God in one hour of disease can shake thy strongest fortification; he can cut off thy supplies, and break thy staff of life; a light assault may beat thy soul out of its frail citadel (*King*).

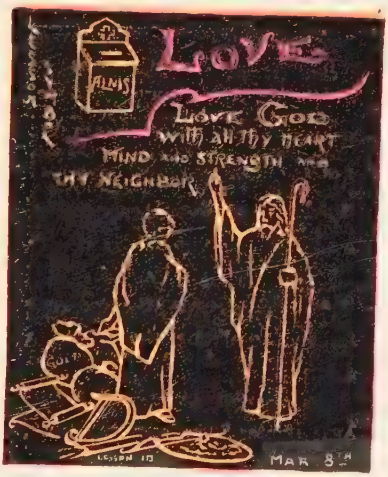
HOLD YOURSELF TO ACCOUNT.

1. Bad debtors are often very careless and unconcerned about their debts. When embarrassed, they contrive to banish the thought of it, and laugh and revel away the care and sorrow of it. So do sinners stifle their convictions in business, or in pleasure. 2. They are commonly wasteful. Having no hope of paying, they care not how much further they run. 3. They are commonly very shy of their creditors, and loth to come to an account. 4. They are apt to be dilatory and deceitful, to promise payment this time and the other, but still to break their word, and beg a further delay. How much better to be open and honest with man and God! To pay to the utmost farthing what one can, and seek a kind forgiveness for the rest!. Heaven has a generous law for bankrupts; but the bankrupt must be honest in his settlement (*H.*).


Lesson Symbol
SAVIOUR
THE GREAT Prophet
Jesus ever lives SAVES
You must Go to Him
LESSON 7
FEB. 15th

FAITH
LESSON SYMBOL
She touched the border of His garment
LESSON 8
FEB. 23


Lesson Symbol
JESUS the Son of God
HEAR Ye Him
LESSON 9
MAR. 1ST


ALMS
LOVE
LOVE GOD with all thy heart MIND AND STRENGTH AND THY NEIGHBOR
LESSON 10
MAR 8th

PRAYER
KNOCK and it shall be OPENED UNTO YOU
LESSON 11
MAR 15th

Watchfulness
WINE IS A MOCKER
Touch not TASTE not
LESSON 12
MAR, 22

Hints for Blackboard Talks.

LESSON VIII.—FIRST QUARTER.

Jesus was everything to some and nothing to others. Some were helped as they could be helped by no one else in all the world. They had faith in him. The woman who had so much faith that she pressed close to him and touched the hem of his garment was healed. Reading about Jesus will not save us. Admiring the character of Christ will not save us. We must have faith and must press close to the feet of the Christ if we would profit by his ministry.

Jesus himself said there were times and places where he could not do the work for which he was sent because of the absence of faith.

LESSON VII.—FIRST QUARTER.

The prophets were men sent of God to tell the people about God. There were many. Name the principal ones and give a brief outline of their prophecies.

Many of them foretold the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah was the great prophet who foretold the coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was a prophet, and more than a prophet. He was the fulfillment of the great prophecy. He was the long-waited-for Messiah. Jesus was a helper. He glorified God by being and doing good. He is the great helper. No one is turned away who goes to the great Prophet, Priest and King.

LESSON X.—FIRST QUARTER.

The Christian life is a life of love. Jesus is the great teacher of love. The love of Jesus in the heart makes those who possess it loving and kind. For one to profess to love Christ and not be willing to help others, is to cast a doubt on the genuineness of the conviction.

God says love thy neighbor with all thy heart. This is not easy to do when the heart is full of malice and anger and the soul filled with selfishness.

Jesus gave all for the salvation of the world and the heart that is filled with the love of Jesus is filled also with love for those who are in need.

As the water flows from the spring, so should love flow from the hearts of those who love the Christ.

LESSON IX.—FIRST QUARTER.

God bore witness that Jesus was his only begotten Son. The ages that have passed since then have been full of witnesses who have testified that Jesus is the Son of God and has the power to uplift the weary and make the sinful rejoice in the pardon of their sins.

Many experiments have been tried by Christians. They have wandered away and "heard others"—they have listened to strange and fascinating doctrines; but in the end the great majority have been compelled to admit that they have not had that peace of mind that comes from the Word of God. Hear *ye Him*. This is the injunction, and in the following of this command is perfect peace.

LESSON XII.—FIRST QUARTER.

The tempter is always present. Just when you feel that all is safe and that you are not in the least danger of falling, the tempter is spreading a lure for your feet.

There is but one safe way. Shun the way of the temptation. Cling to the Saviour. Touch not; taste not; handle not. Come not near the presence of evil. Be not lead into the first step. Pray early and often that he will guide thy feet into the paths of righteousness and love. The first drink, the first cigar, the first lie; these are open doors into the soul through which the tempter will force his way. The world is full of sorrow because so many let in the little sin and the little sin opens the way for a larger, and the soul is lost.

LESSON XI.—FIRST QUARTER.

Prayer is the Christian refuge and strength. Prayer is a message to God. Prayer is the open window of the soul through which the light of heaven streams. Not to pray is to be out of touch with heaven. We can not expect that God will bless us if we do not turn to him in prayer. To forget to thank God is to be unworthy of the blessings of God.

God does not turn away from those who come to him prayerfully. The more we go to God in prayer the stronger will be our faith and the greater our love for Him. He is the one Friend who always responds to the requests of those who love him.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. "BLESSED."—If we could see things as they are, if we were not deceived by the masquerade of this poor life, if we could but see what the men are behind the scenes, penetrate their hearts, watch their inner motives, and discern their secret feelings—we should find but few who could bear the name of blessed (*Spurgeon*). Only he who has the spirit of a loving and faithful servant among men can truly be called blessed. Even in lofty positions this spirit may be his, yet in the day when we are assigned our places at the Master's feast there will be surprises in store for many of us. The Romans had a feast at which the servants were made guests; business was suspended, and masters waited upon their slaves. Blessed indeed are they for whom the Lord of all hath "prepared a table in the presence of their enemies."

Robed by the Master, wearing their crown,
Guests at the banquet they shall sit down.

II. "FIND WATCHING."—What! did we fancy that the haste and the urgency of worldly business would conflict with the solemnity of watching for our Lord? Why, this kingdom of his is to be, during all the waiting time, like a house of business. It will be as a merchant house in which everybody is bent on making all he can out of the money given him. He gives no picture of a church ever on its knees at some silent shrine, praying for a far-off time. He foresees a body of men busy and intent, absorbed in the practical use of their gifts, bent on turning five talents into ten, or two into four (*Canon Scott-Holland*). A man in Mr. Moody's meeting said: "For five years I have lived on the Mount of Transfiguration." "How many souls have you brought to Christ in that time?" asked Mr. Moody. "Not any." "Then, my brother, I advise you to come down from the mount and get where you can be a coworker with Christ in saving the world" (*S. S. Journal*).

III. "BE READY."—A call for a missionary to a foreign land was once made. A devoted man offered himself. "When can you start?" he was asked. "To-morrow," was the answer. When Sir Colin Campbell was asked how long it would take him to be ready to start for India to quell the rebellion, he replied, "Half an hour." The Master's servants should be ready to be summoned to their account at any moment. We should not spend time in seeking to find out *when* Christ will come, which should be spent in getting ready for his coming.

So Doing.—Be like the men on the wall of Jerusalem, who worked while they watched, and watched while they worked. It would be a glad thing for our summons to find us on our knees in prayer if that were just then the right place for us to be, a sad thing if we were thus neglecting some God-given duty of action. Be ready, not for death, but for every opportunity for a loyal, Christ-like life.

IV. HIS STEWARD.—A beggar asked something of an honorable lady. She gave him sixpence, saying: "This is more than God ever gave me." "Oh, madam!" said the beggar, "you have abundance, and God hath given all you have; say not so, good madam." "I speak the truth," said she, "for God hath not given, but lent unto me what I have that I may bestow it upon such as thou art" (*Spence*). Our work is appointed to us; what we leave undone no one else may do, and there will be a gap in the fabric of our existence, a missing note in the eternal harmonies.

Each hour hath its appointed sound;
All life is set with rhythmic times;
The notes escape earth's narrow bound,
But God is ringing out the chimes (*H. H.*).

V. DRUNKEN AND UNFAITHFUL.—An old truth often illustrated. There is a siren in the intoxicating cup which lures those who heed away from the course of duty to shipwreck of faith and honor; a Circe who transforms those who drink her potion into the lowest of beasts. Rufus Hatch, a wealthy banker, left these words in his will: "I most strongly warn my children not to use tobacco in any shape, taste or use wine or liquor in any way. I earnestly desire that my children shall not gamble in any way for

money. Their father has had experience sufficient to serve for all his posterity." One of the oldest and most successful of State Street bankers, when asked how he managed to continue so active, said: "A clear conscience and a clear mind are two wonderfully efficient preservatives. You can't take your cocktail in the morning, your tipple at noon, and your nightcap in the evening, and retain the latter. You can't override your neighbor, or ruin him, and possess the former" (*Peloubet*).

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH GOD'S GIFTS?

ENJOY
EMPLOY
DEVELOP
DISTRIBUTE
RECEIVE
RESTORE
THEM

GOLDEN TEXT.

Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.

Luke xii. 8.

LESSON XIII. MARCH 29.

REVIEW.

The time embraced in the lessons of this quarter reaches from the birth of Jesus to the last year of his ministry on earth. We are left in the presence of his final teachings, and the closing conflict.

His home through all these years has been in Galilee, at Nazareth and Capernaum; and although his infancy knew a brief exile in Egypt, and he has done much teaching in Judæa, and left some footprints in Samaria, the northern province has been the main scene of his labors.

THE LESSONS.

Luke, Chapters I. to XII.

I. The F. of C.—Who was Zacharias? Who was his wife? What was promised concerning a son that should be born to them?

II. The B. J.—How did Jesus happen to be born in a stable? How did he happen once to be left alone in Jerusalem? How long did he live at Nazareth?

III. The M. of J. the B.—Where was John the Baptist educated? Where did he preach? What did he preach? What occurred at the first recorded meeting of John and Jesus? How did John's life end?

IV. The E. M. of J.—Where was Jesus accustomed to go on the Sabbath? What was the text of his first recorded sermon? How did his sermon affect the people?

V. The P. of J.—In what remarkable way was a palsied man brought to Jesus? What twofold healing did he receive from Jesus? Who only can forgive sins? How could Jesus forgive?

VI. The S. on the M.—What does Jesus say to those who are quick to find fault with others? How can you tell the character of a tree, or man?

VII. The C. H.—How did a centurion show remarkable faith? What great work did Jesus do at the village of Nain? What did it show as to Jesus' character?

VIII. F. E.—On what occasion did Jesus perceive that power had gone forth from him? When did he first call death a sleep?

IX. J. the M.—How did men speculate as to who Jesus was? Who did Peter say he was? What does Christ say of those who follow him? Who will lose his life?

X. T. L. to O. N.—Under the law what is a man's duty to his neighbor? Who is one's neighbor? In the case which Christ gave, who kept the law?

XI. T. about P.—How many distinct petitions in the prayer which Jesus taught? Can we get everything we see fit to ask for from God? What can we receive?

XII. F. and U. S.—What does Jesus teach his disciples to watch for? What does he say of the wise steward? What the faults and the fate of the bad steward?

STANDARD BIBLE LESSONS.

Vol. XXI., No. 2.

PREPARED BY E. B. WAKEFIELD.
GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES BY J. W. McGARVEY.

April, May, June, 1896.

SECOND QUARTER.—LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF OUR LORD.

LESSON I. APRIL 5.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Strive to enter in at the strait gate.
—Luke xiii. 24.

WARNING AGAINST SIN.

Luke xiii. 22-30.

Time.—It is difficult to fix the exact chronological order of many of the sayings in Luke. The date of this lesson must be placed not later than February, A. D. 30.

Place.—Jesus is once again in Perea, east of the Jordan, journeying, as the text shows, toward Jerusalem.

22 And he went *on his way* through *the* cities and villages, teaching, and journeying *toward* *on unto* Je-ru'sa-lĕm.

23 *Then said one* *And one said* unto him, Lord, are *there* *they* few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in *at* *by* the *strait gate:* *narrow door:* for many, I say unto you, *will* *shall* seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

I. EARNESTNESS ENJOINED.

EXPLANATORY.

22, 23. He went on his way.—Christ's last journey to Jerusalem was deliberate; indeed, after reaching the city, he retired to Perea, and extended teaching which otherwise might have been cut short (John x. 39-42). **Are they few that be saved?**—Jesus' teaching was at once high in its demands, and broad in its compassion and hope. The Jewish mind, which was perplexed by his teaching, was harsh and exclusive. Passages from the second Book of Esdras, written forty years after this, express Jewish feeling: "The Most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few." "There be many more of them that perish than of them that shall be saved; like as a wave is greater than a drop." The same perplexing problems puzzle and distress the serious thinkers of to-day. Probably amidst the multitudes of men, many are saved, of whom the world knows little. We have a right to believe that under the divine economy all who die in infancy are saved. In the coming ages we may believe that the proportion of the saved will be immensely increased. Whether any future opportunity of salvation will be given to the heathen, we can not, perhaps, fully determine. We seem left to *act* under the conviction that they will perish without the preaching of the gospel (*Dr. A. C. Kendrick*).

24. Strive to enter in by the narrow door.—Jesus does not answer the question. It is a question of curiosity, a question of destiny, perhaps too complicated to be explained to his

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Mar. 30.—"Let it Alone this Year" (Luke xiii. 1-9).
Tuesday, Mar. 31.—Like Leaven (Luke xiii. 10-21).
Wednesday, April 1.—Warning Against Sin (Luke xiii. 22-30).
Thursday, April 2.—"Ye Would Not" (Luke xiii. 31-35).
Friday, April 3.—Enduring Trial (James i. 1-18).
Saturday, April 4.—Pure Religion (James i. 19-27).
Sunday, April 5.—The Narrow Gate (Matt. vii. 7-14).

25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, [Lord,] open [unto to] us; and he shall answer and say [unto to] you, I know you not whence ye are;

hearers. He sets their attention on *duty*. Here is an imperative precept to all who would find the better life. "Every one to whom we would say, 'There is another

JERUSALEM.

life after this; would you like it to be a happy one?' would answer, 'Certainly I should.' But if no one expects to get a comfortable place here without taking trouble; why should one expect to get a good place hereafter without taking any"? (*Lynch*). "Except you repent," except you consent to let go of all, and begin again; "Except you turn, and become as little children," you can not enter the kingdom. Dr. Maclaren says, the gate of discipleship is narrow, because you have to make yourself small to enter in thereat. You must leave outside the pride of wealth, position, righteousness, everything you call your own, or you will stick in the entrance like a loaded beast in some narrow door way. You can not drive through there in a carriage and pair; you must alight and walk. The surest way to get in is down on your knees. **Many shall seek . . . and not be able . . . when once.**—We think verses 24-27 are to be taken in close connection. All will desire, and many will earnestly seek to enter in, when it is too late. Whether the connection of verses 24, 25 is as close as we have indicated or not, the explanation is the same. Many will be very earnest at last, who were fatally indifferent in the day of their opportunity.

II. DISAPPOINTMENT FORETOLD.

25-27. When once the master of the house is risen.—The figure is of a master of a house, who perhaps has made a feast, and awaits in his guest chamber his invited company. When the appointed hour arrives he arises and shuts the door. His plans can not delay; the time of admission is past. **Ye begin to stand without and to knock.**—There is a barrier between two classes of persons now. Conditions are changed, opportunity is gone. Men will intensely desire their Lord's acceptance sometime. Why will they not receive with courage and good conscience now, what they will vainly call for in guilt and terror by and by? **I know you not.**—I do not approve and accept you; I do not recognize

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten or did eat and drunk or drink in thy presence, and thou hast taught or didst teach in our streets;

27 But or And he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye or ye workers of iniquity.

28 There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see A'bră-hăm, and I'saac, and Jā'cob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. or yourselves cast forth without.

29 And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

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you as friends. **We did eat and drink in thy presence.**—There will be some terrible disappointments in the final day. The people plead their familiarity, they had been used to seeing and hearing him. This is a partial reply to the original question; a stern declaration, that in the day of judgment, no special favor would be granted to the souls of the chosen people (*P. C.*). When men rise to place and power it is wonderful how many "friends" they have! Our Master might forgive any mere personal grievance; but he who rejects Jesus rejects more than Jesus. **Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.**—Christ gets entirely to the question of character. There was a decisive moral quality in what these men had done, or failed to do. They had at least failed, as so many do, to remember that in matters of duty it is often as important to consider *when*, as *what*.

> To come in sight of the blest Isle of Palms,
> And drift forever by; to count on Heaven,
> And but once see its glorious outer walls,—
> O God, spare this!

III. HOPE ENCOURAGED

28. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—"A terrible formula, which expresses the intensest form of anguish." Bitter sorrow, and envy and rage are mingled. **When ye shall see Abraham.**—They should see the patriarchs and prophets on whom they so prided themselves, but they should not share their company. Others would do that. And those others would be Gentiles, who came from the farthest points of earth. **There are last which shall be first.**—Some who are first in opportunity are last to improve; some first in the race are last to the goal. The Jews had been richly privileged with heavenly communions; the Gentiles had stood far off. A great change was coming with the new kingdom. And when the higher kingdom dawns, there will be great changes. Some very high will be low; and some who are low will be very high.

A GENERAL LAW.—Strange as his words may sound, Christ only announced a general law. The way to all higher life is difficult. The gate to *wealth* is strait. A capitalist says he came very near not being wealthy; it took ten years of his hardest work to make his first thousand dollars. Only he who accepts the narrow beginning can truly enter. Two boys went to a city. One entered as a fashionable clerk, and lived from the first "in style." The other hired to a gardener and florist in the suburb, and was duly snubbed and cast off by his friend because his garb and his ways were so plain. After thirty years a threadbare book-keeper applied for a position to a seedsman who was worth scores of thousands of dollars; and out of sympathy it was given. The gardener's boy befriended his early friend, the clerk! The gate of all *true education*

is narrow. And he who gains a knowledge that makes him a power in the world, will toil long and persistently for it. Demosthenes was at first weak and awkward in body, and harsh and tuneless of voice. But he entered the narrow gate; he banished himself from society for a long season; he climbed mountains; he sought the seashore and matched his voice against the roar of the waves; and he became the first orator of the ancient world.

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO BE SAVED?—Because it is so difficult to grow into the *right kind of character*,—to even *get started* into the right kind of character. The gate to life is not a formal or artificial passage. If one can come into a state of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, he is taken out of the realm of the unsaved. The vital point, the difficult gate, is to get into such a state of character. A devout man, who dreamed of dying and awaking in heaven, said he was surprised at three things: 1. At the number present whom he had not expected to see there. 2. At the number absent whom he expected to find there. 3. At finding himself there.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Door. 23, 24. Where was Jesus journeying at the time of this lesson? What question was asked of him? What exhortation does he give? What will be true of many who seek? **2. A Barrier.** 25–28. Why can they not enter? What will they say? What will the Lord answer? What plea will they make? What will be their sentence? What their feelings? **3. A Kingdom.** 28–30. Who will be seen in the kingdom of God? From whence shall they come who shall sit down in the kingdom? What does Christ say of the change of positions in the change from earth to heaven?

COLLECT.

Heavenly Father, help us to know that the gate of life is difficult because we are so imperfect, and the life beyond is so perfect and glorious. May we be determined at any cost to enter in. Help us to be humble and childlike; to enter the gate of patience, and forbearance, and unselfishness, and love; to know that condition of mind and heart which finds the peace and joy of heaven even here. May we make the painstaking effort, that, by thy grace, renews and restores our life. Through Christ we ask. Amen.

HELPFUL LITERATURE.

The wise student of the life of Christ will buy books, but will buy them slowly. Books unread impart no wisdom. Such works as a Bible Dictionary, and Harmony of the Gospels (*e. g.*, Smith's, and Robinson's, published by Revell, Chicago), are valuable for constant reference. Descriptions of the land and customs of ancient Israel, are interesting and important. Among very numerous works may be mentioned McGarvey's "Lands of the Bible," Geikie's "The Holy Land and the Bible," Stapfer's "Galilee in the Time of Christ," Tristram's "Land of Israel," Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," Thompson's "The Land and the Books." Lives of Christ are numerous, some very helpful. Farrar, Geikie, Edersheim, Abbott, Hanna, and others, have written well. Young's "Christ of History," Schaff's "Person of Christ," Haygood's "Man of Galilee," Boardman's "Divine Man," "Ecce Homo," are samples of suggestive books. People who are disposed to lean greatly on commentaries are likely to be disappointed in them; yet there are many good and valuable works in this field. Abbot, Barnes, Cambridge Bible, Godet (two vols.), Pulpit (two vols.), Rice—the names of good commentaries is almost legion. "The Biblical Illustrator," (Luke, three vols., Randolph, New York), is very full of suggestions to teachers and speakers. Wardlaw on "Miracles," Trench on "Miracles and Parables," W. M. Taylor on "Parables," and the works of Arnot, Bruce, Howson, and McDonald, in this field, are good. As general helps, or helps on special lessons, note such works as Bissel's "Biblical Antiquities," Robertson's "Sermons," Trench's "Studies in the Gospels," Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," Herron's "The Larger Christ," "Ben Hur," "Philosophy of Plan of Salvation," Phelps' "The Still Hour," Thomas' "Through Death to Life," Sears' "Foregleams and Foreshadows," Miller's "Practical Religion."

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE OPEN DOOR.—The gate to life may be difficult, but on earth it is ever open. In a way, Christ did answer the question. He may appear to say, "You have some idea of what eternal life means; behold for yourselves how many are entering it." . . . Where we are, and what we are, decide what doors are open before us. The door of education is open to the youth; the door of fortune to the man of strength and good judgment; the door of heaven to one who still holds a tender heart and conscience. . . . What do prisoners escaping from a dungeon care for the narrowness of the passage? Any doorway to light and liberty is beautiful. And the periods of close constraint, that bring us away from the bondage of our depraved nature, and the darkness of God's disapproval, and introduces us to heavenly communions,—these are precious passages.

II. THE DOOR CLOSED.—1. There comes a time when the door will not open. Desire to enter may be intense, even desperate, and yet all in vain. A man may desire education, fortune, reputation, love, when the day in which he could have gained them all is hopelessly and forever passed.

2. Thus, as the years pass, we listen in life to the sound of closing doors as one after another they strike upon the ear of the soul and of the conscience. We hear them proclaiming that a something which once was ours, and for the use of which we still have to answer, is ours no longer. We hear them more often, we hear them louder as the time flies past; and thus in their frequency and their urgency they lead us up toward a climax when there will be a closing of a door, and none beyond it (*Canon Liddon*).

3. *Lord, Open.*—"There is some awful mistake; we have joined in the ordinances of the church, though we had little heart in them; we have listened to a great many sermons and were not over-critical of the preachers; we have had the blessings of a Christian civilization, and have often acknowledged them on Thanksgiving Day, and we expected to enter heaven with the rest."

> "So lone! so late! and dark and chill the night,
> Oh, let us in that we may find the light."
> "Too late, too late; ye can not enter now."

4. *Workers of Iniquity.*—There is a variety of mineral which, when held before the light, exhibits translucency only on its edges, but is dark in the center. Such are marble, flint, or hornstone. It is so with some men: the light of Christianity has shone upon them and modified much of their external conduct, but within, the center of their being, remains in the darkness of sin (*Hitchcock*).

III. WITHOUT AND WITHIN.—

1. I dreamed that I sat with Conscience,
In a place where time had ceased
And we talked of my former living
In the land where the years increased;
And I felt I should have to answer
The questions put to me,
And to face the answers and questions
Throughout an eternity.

The ghosts of forgotten actions
Came floating before my sight,
And things that I dreamed were dead things
Were alive with a terrible might.
And I know of the future judgment
How dreadful soe'er it be,
That to sit alone with Conscience
Will be judgment enough for me.

2. "*They Shall Come.*"—They of all others deserve to sit down,—they who have come from afar, who sought and journeyed long to reach the gate. . . . We are

none so earnest and urgent as the occasion and emergency demand. As we would love to see redeemed souls in heaven, let us love to see redeemed souls on earth. "You are a good man, and every one likes you," said one preacher to another; "but you are not making a strong enough pull on the souls of men to bring them actually into the kingdom of Christ. You do not impress your people as being in earnest; you lack momentum; you need to swallow a steam engine." *Strive* and ye *can* enter.

MANY A AND BUT ONE PATH OF PROMISE PEACE

CHRIST CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Come; for all things are now ready.
—Luke xiv. 17.

LESSON II. APRIL 12.

PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.

Luke xiv. 15-24.

Time.—December, A. D. 29. **Place.**—In Perea, beyond Jordan.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 Then said he / But he said / unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and / he bade many:

I. A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

EXPLANATORY.

15. Blessed is he that shall eat bread.—Jesus has just been teaching a noble lesson concerning hospitality. Not those who could amply repay us were to be ever sought for our feasts, but those who were neglected and needy, and could not repay. One of the company responds with a pious ejaculation, otherwise the words are serious enough. Perhaps there is a degree of Pharasaic complacency, and the thought, "Yes, how happy it will be for us, Jews as we are, when the time comes for us to sit down to that feast in the kingdom of heaven."

16, 17. But he said unto him.—The parable which follows contains teaching for all ages of the church, but at first it was a reply to the guest's remark. "Yes," says the Master, "blessed indeed are they who sit down to the heavenly banquet. You think you are one whom the King has invited; but what have you done with the invitation? I know many who have received it who have tossed it aside; *are you of that number?*" Here follows the story (*P. C.*). **A certain man made a great supper.**—A great and endlessly blessed gathering, a great culmination of joys. The imagery would be familiar to the guests present. The feast was heaven; the giver, God; the guests

PLOUGHING IN THE EAST.

17 And he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I can not come.

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invited were the successive generations of the chosen people. All is well so far. The supper is indeed great for what it signifies.

GREAT, because of the greatness of him who has prepared it—*God*.
because for the *whole world*,—"Preach the gospel to every creature."
because of the *company*—Father, Son, Spirit, angels, saints.
because of its *duration*—it will be an eternal feast.
because of the *place* of joy and rest—"Before the throne."
because purchased at a *great price*—the blood of Christ.
in the *mercy* and *love* shown for those so unworthy of it.
in its *excellence*—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard" (*Van Doren*).

And he bade many.—Invitations were sent beforehand, that those bidden might be ready. The Jews were especially told that a great feast was preparing. To-day, those who grow up in Christian homes, and under gospel teaching, have a call to be ready when the day of accountability comes.

17. Sent forth his servant at supper time.—The time of the feast had come, the kingdom was at hand, and ready to be opened. The herald had gone before, and Jesus, who was pre-eminently the *servant*, had come to make the final call. **To them that are bidden.**—The Jewish people collectively. Theirs were the prophecies, theirs the promises. The day of fulfillment was at hand, and they were indulging perverted hopes, and were zealously busy in the hindering toil of earth.

II. UNWORTHY EXCUSES.

18. They all began . . . to make excuse.—There were individual exceptions, but they were nothing in comparison. As a nation, the Jews rejected their feast. They were "solemn triflers in the matter of religion." They talked much of the coming kingdom, but on a low plane. An earthly kingdom of wealth and power, they desired; a *heavenly* kingdom, they did not. These Jews were a type of a great multitude, who live in the light, and mouth familiar phrases of a great invitation, which they care not for. **I have bought a field.**—If the field was *bought*, why must he be in a hurry to see it? The fact was, he was absorbed in his selfish and worldly affairs. "The petty interests and pursuits of earth are balanced against the claims of the kingdom of God, and are preferred." Even if some detail of the sale needed his attention, that was no great excuse; he should have remembered the feast, and arranged for it. **I have bought five yoke of oxen.**—The excuses all have the same character. This man should have proved his oxen before; or he might have deferred the matter a little. The fact was, these men cared more for worldly pursuits than they did for the loftier service of God. **I have married a wife.**—All the more reason why he should go. He should have taken his wife with him. If that were impossible, she should have bade him go. Wives do not often hinder. Men of strict conscience, and sterling principle, make the best husbands.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, April 6—The Invitation of Old (Isa. lv. 1-13).
Tuesday, April 7.—He that Exalts Himself Humbled (Luke xiv. 1-14).
Wednesday, April 8.—Parable of the Great Supper (Luke xiv. 15-24).
Thursday, April 9.—Count the Cost (Luke xiv. 25-35).
Friday, April 10.—Away Beyond Jordan (John x. 30-42).
Saturday, April 11.—The True Bread (John vi. 27-35).
Sunday, April 12.—The Great Marriage Feast Matt. xxii. 1-14).

21 So that / And the servant came, and shewed / told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed and the halt, / blind and the blind, / lame.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, / what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room.

24 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel / constrain *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, That / that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor *more*."

It is something to present an excuse; there is at least a recognition of obligation. Christ represents these men as considerate and courteous. And yet the master was angry. He saw he was trifled with. But how much greater the offense when men wholly neglect, or mock, the invitation?

III. GRATEFUL ACCEPTORS.

21. Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city.—The feast has been long in preparing, it is ready, it must not be in vain when so many are suffering and perishing from want. The situation demands haste. Many commentators lay stress on the the two later goings forth of the servant. The first was in the walled city. The men who naturally heard the call first, the learned and the leaders of the people, had refused. Go, says the master, to the publicans and sinners—the neglected and despised. The by-streets of an eastern city would abound in them. **Bring hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame.**—What a picture of states in sin! How many souls are indeed poor, maimed, blind, lame!

22-24. And yet there is room.—Glorious truth! Millions have been saved, and yet there is room. Millions have been invited, and have come, and have gone to heaven, but heaven is not yet full. There is a banquet there which no number can exhaust; there are fountains which no number can drink dry; there are harps there which other hands may strike, and there are seats there which others may occupy (*Barnes*). **Go out into the highways and hedges.**—This was out of the city, clearly among the Gentiles. **And constrain them to come in.**—In the heavenly kingdom it only can be moral constraint. A greater pressure is put on this class than on those first invited. *They* know, or had opportunity to know, the nature of this heavenly feast. But these outsiders, far off, and seemingly neglected, would be treated differently, They had not known a living Lord, and his gracious purposes. So, earnest men were sent forth to urge the claims of their message, to plead and pray, and by the fervor of their own lives to *constrain* men, and bear them with them heavenwards.

24. None of these men.—That is, none of these men that have been invited and *refused to come.* Their self-exclusion shall stand. They have made their election; they have chosen their portion elsewhere, and their destiny shall be accordingly. There is here announced no arbitrary law in the kingdom of grace; simply the law that men may, by persistent disobedience, cut themselves finally off from proffered blessings (*Kendrick*).

COLLECT.

O Father, may we feel that thou art not calling us to dark, and slavish, and joyless life, but to brightness, and beauty, and joys eternal. May we rejoice to hear our Father's call; and into the blessed feast, which thy love has prepared, its sweet communions, and its ever fresh delights, may we enter more abundantly forever. Amen.

SCENES FROM THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Feast Offered First to the Few. 15-20. Where was Jesus sitting at meat? What did one of the guests say? How did Jesus reply? What was the custom in sending invitations to a feast? What was the message sent by the servant in the parable? What did those invited begin to do? What was the excuse of the first? Of the second? Of the third? Whom do these represent? **2. A Feast Enjoyed at Last by the Many.** What is the master's feeling at this treatment? Whom does he command his servant to bring instead? What is the servant's statement? Where does he command him next to seek guests? Does he limit the number? Is there any limit to the number which our Master can entertain if they will accept? What is said of those who were first bidden? What only will keep men from the banquet of the kingdom of God?

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A FEAST PREPARED.—1. *The Time of Acceptance is Now.*—Men like to delay important matters, especially if there is some immediate difficulty. He who "sat at meat" turns from the pointed lesson which Christ has been teaching, to the future. The Bread of life was before them, the kingdom at hand. Blessed were they who had *already* come to the feast.

2. *A Personal and Repeated Invitation.*—You give your friend a general invitation to come and dine with you some day and he does not come. You say, "Come to-day," and he will probably come. God's servants should make their invitations to the gospel feast personal and pressing.

3. *Ready.*—Human conditions were ready for the gospel. God was ready to reveal it. Ready is a favorite old English word. "Ready, aye ready!" is a favorite refrain of mariners. Suetonius says that Cæsar kept his soldiers always ready to enter immediately upon any undertaking, and the tramp of his legions shook the world. The Saxon king whose weakness cost him his kingdom was called Ethelred the Unready.

4. *The Guests Were Not Ready.*—The chosen people of God turned away. Many to-day are not ready when the gospel invitation is given. Many will not be ready when the final summons shall come. A ship lay in the harbor waiting for favorable winds and tide to set sail. The passenger knew that it might depart at any hour, but there was much to attract him on shore, and he waited. In the night the anchor was raised, the ship floated out over the bar, and at morning there stood on the shore a man watching it as it grew dim in the distance. His opportunity had come, and he was not ready.

II. A FEAST NEGLECTED.—1. An excuse is a thing which should never be offered. We should sometimes give reasons for our actions, but there ought never to be an occasion for an excuse, since it implies a wrong somewhere, a lack of earnestness or sincerity.

2. There may be degrees of abruptness in refusal. One begs politely to be excused, another says, I can not come. The result is the same in either case. The man who finds himself drawn into the current above Niagara Falls need not jump overboard to commit suicide. He need only sit still in his boat disregarding the help offered to him, and the result is sure.

3. *Earthly Interests.*—Can the heart be too full to admit Christ? Good lady, may I ask, dare you put that in a prayer: "O Lord, because I lack nothing I pray thee excuse"?. Dare you say in plain English, "My heart is full—my loved ones. If I were widowed, childless, roofless, desolate,—then I"— You ask me if I mean to hint that you love these too much. A thousand times then, no; but that you love the Giver too little, yes (*Haynes*).

4. *At the Bottom.*—I was at a conference held about the state of the people in Liverpool. They were conferring about why it was that so many of the working people especially would not go to church or chapel. You never heard such a number of reasons—the people that did not go were not to blame, it was always the people about the church, or in the church, who were to blame, until an old man got up and said: "Mr. Mayor, there is one reason that strikes me that I have not heard a word about yet." We were all most eager to hear what this was. "What I have to say is, that most of it comes from human depravity." We have reason to be infinitely kind, but we mistake when we excuse even others too much (*Frazer*).

III. A FEAST APPRECIATED.—1. *Go Into the Streets.*—The servants go unquestioningly to the unworthy. We too often shrink from the fallen, thinking to show our horror of their sin by holding ourselves aloof, instead of proving our Christ-like compassion by going to them in true and sympathetic helpfulness. The Master's servant on the Master's business must put self aside.

2. *It Is Done.*—Grand fulfillment of the prophecy: "To the poor the gospel is preached." They would not have been neglected even had the chosen people accepted the good news. Yet now others take the places, in a sense, of those who felt not their high honor. And yet there is room,

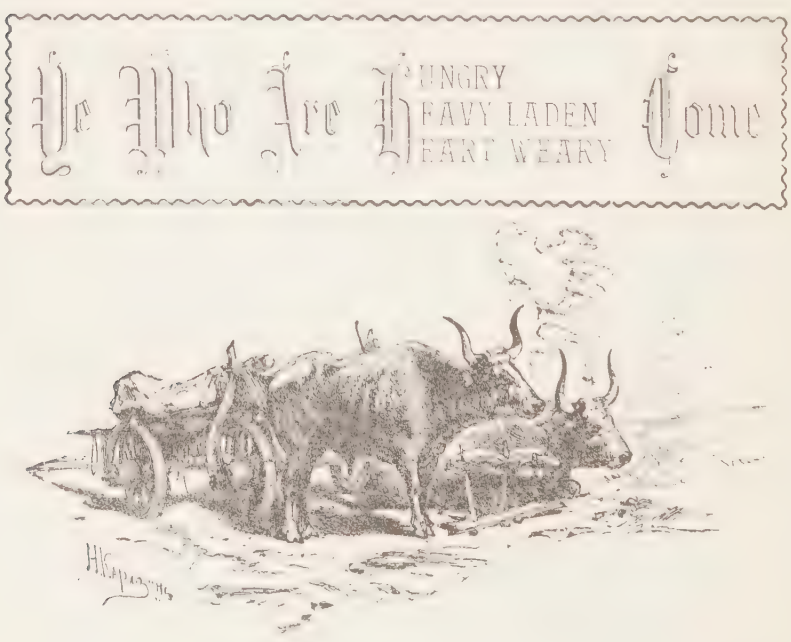
3. *Kind Compulsion.*—We must take care how we give the invitation. I think we have gone contrary to Christ's command, sometimes, and compelled men to stay out. Oh, for the simplicity of Christ. People come into the churches, find things angular, cold, and stiff, and they go away, never again to come. The church ought to be a great home circle, everybody sharing his hymn book, everyone shaking hands, church architecture and surroundings saying, "Come in and be at home." Compel men by Christain example. A minister was climbing among the Swiss mountains and thought himself alone, when he heard a voice, "Father, look out for the safe path, I am following," and he saw that he was climbing not only for himself, but for his boy. Compel by kindly admonitions. I do not believe that there is one here who, if approached in a wise and brotherly manner, would refuse to listen. A Christian doctor, a friend of mine, became anxious about the soul of a brother physician. He went to his office, and not finding him in, told the young man in waiting to give him his Christian love. The worldly doctor was stirred in spirit, and said, after a while, "That must mean my soul." He took his hat, went to the office of the Christian, and said, "What must I do to be saved?" and the two knelt in the office and commended their souls to God (*Talmage*).

4. *The Despised Honored.*—

> But lo! of those
> Who call "Christ, Christ," there shall be many found
> In judgment, farther off from Him by far,
> Than such to whom His name was never known (*Dante*).

Leslie, the painter, tells of his hearing the preference expressed by Rogers for seats in churches without pews, opposed by a gentleman who prefers pews, and said: "If there were seats only I might find myself sitting by my coachman." Rogers replied: "And perhaps you may be glad to find yourself beside him in the next world" (*F. Jacox*).

5. *The Excuse Granted.*—Christ is master of the feast, and he will excuse those who ask it, after his repeated invitations. Excused from the things for which they most long,—peace, joy, unfailing riches, and undying affections; excused from the only food which will satisfy the soul; excused from unfading glories while they chase the phantom lights of the miasmal haunts of earth, excused—*because they will not come.*



LESSON III. APRIL 19.

GOLDEN TEXT.
There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.
—Luke xv. 10.

THE LOST FOUND.

Luke xv. 11-24.

Time.—December, A. D. 29. **Place.**—Perea, beyond Jordan.

This parable is at once a history, a poem, and a prophecy. A history of man in innocence, in sin, in redemption, in glory. A poem—the song of salvation, whose refrain "My son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found," is ringing through the courts of the Zion of God. A prophecy, speaking with intimate foresight, in warning and hope, in reproof and encouragement, to every one of us. It stands before us "the pearl of parables," "the gospel in the gospel" (*P. C.*).

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there he wasted his substance with riotous living.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A SAD DEPARTURE.

11, 12. A certain man had two sons.—The householder represents our heavenly Father. The two sons undoubtedly represent the two classes whose presence led to the discourse: the scribes and Pharisees (the elder son), and the publicans and sinners (the younger son). But all men are represented by these two classes. In the course of history the difference between the two was fitly represented by the Jews and Gentiles. But the parable did not directly or exclusively apply to the Jews and Gentiles as such. It represents two types of character (*Schaff*). **And the younger of them said.**—No law required it, but it was customary, at least not uncommon, for Jewish parents to divide their estates during their lifetime. The elder son, being regarded as especially the representative of the family, was entitled to a double share in the property; the younger to a single share (Deut. xxi. 17). Most children feel that they can use property better for themselves than their parents can for them. It is commonly a mistake. This boy wanted more than to be set up in business, which often is well enough; he desired his whole estate. **He divided unto them.**—He set off to each son his share. Here note that the elder son remained at home, and went on in the old life which he loved. The taking of property only gave him added responsibilities. Why did the father allow the younger son thus to go forth? He must have known the danger of it. Bad as it was, it was probably best. Restless and disaffected, he would have spoiled himself, and embittered the house, if he had remained. Some lessons only can be learned by experience of toil and sorrow. Perhaps sometime, wiser, and in better spirit, he will come back.

II. WASTE AND WANT.

13. Not many days after.—He seems not to have moved hastily. His property would need to be converted into money or movables; and perhaps some better thoughts, or misgivings, made him hesitate. **Into a far country.**

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, April 13.—The Lost Sheep, and Lost Coin (Luke xv. 1-10).
Tuesday, April 14.—The Lost Son (Luke xv. 11-24).
Wednesday, April 15.—The Elder Son (Luke xv. 25-32).
Thursday, April 16.—A Rebellious People (Isa. i. 2-9).
Friday, April 17.—A Father's Appeal (Isa. i. 10-20).
Saturday, April 18.—Repentance (Ps. lvi. 1-11).
Sunday, April 19.—Restoration (II. Cor. vi. 14-18).

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; country; and he began to be in want.

CAROB BEAN.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have been filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger?

—When a young man chooses to give himself over to vice and shame, he wishes to hide himself from father and mother and better friends; he seeks to get "far away." He wishes no presence that will restrain and rebuke him. "The far country is forgetfulness of God" (*Augustine*). **Wasted his substance.**—He scattered his property, and with it went so much else! Sin wastes body and soul; purity, a good conscience, the jewels of the heart—how they all go!

14. When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine.—The bed of the brook is bare and stony, the trees are leafless and naked before their time, and the grass on the fields is burned away. Outside resources have perished; inner resources are gone. Here is a poor and needy life in a barren world. Everything was gone; the hope of youth, fortune, friends, moral worth; and in that parched and unfriendly land he had no hope of better things, he could regain nothing.

15, 16. He went and joined himself.—He bound himself slavishly. One hopeful thing,—he was not yet wholly at home in that wretched land; he was not a citizen, but he became dependent on one who was. **He sent him into his fields to feed swine.**—A keen touch. To the Jew the swine was an abomination, an animal ceremonially unclean. "In the inner teaching of the parable, this perhaps implies a state in which the man's will and energies have but the one work of ministering to his baser appetites" (*Ellicott*). **And he would fain have been filled with the husks.**—The pods of the Carob tree. They grow from six inches to a foot in length, something like those of the honey locust with which we are familiar. The tree is found extensively in the east, and the fruit is not very nutritious, but is quite abundant, and well fitted for beasts. **And no man gave.**—He had not even free use of this food. He lived in constant hunger. So does every one who follows selfish and sensual pleasures. The men who helped to waste the living, could not, or would not help. You love the world, but remember, the world never loves you. As long as you have wealth, brilliancy, beauty, the world will flatter and share with you. When you are wasted, and poor, and needy, the world will forget or mock you.

III. RECOVERY.

17. When he came to himself.—The expression is full of meaning. In all these years he had not been at his best, nor with his better self. Now he came to his senses. The company of swine was not as pleasant as that which he had lately enjoyed, but it had a great deal better effect upon him. **How many hired servants of my fathers.**—One thing is both a source of wretchedness and hope to him,—he has a vision, a memory, of better things. **His**

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and (before thee, in thy sight:)

19 (And I) am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But (when while) he was yet (a great way afar) off, his father saw him, and (had was moved with) compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"FELL ON HIS NECK, AND KISSED HIM."

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, (and I) am no more worthy to be called thy son.

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mind goes back to the old home. He can see it in its true light now. He can not but compare. Once home was dull, and the world—*his* world, delightfully attractive. He understands it all better now. Even the lowest servants in his father's house never lacked, and here a son of that home starved!

Ah me! how deep the joy and grief
Of thinking what I was!

18, 19. I will arise and go to my father.—Here is a remarkable change, and yet in the setting it is perfectly natural. Once he had been anxious to get away from home and father; now he is eager to get back. This is the same man, yet he seems another man. He determines on a change in the course of his life. He *resolves*. **And will say unto him, Father, I have sinned.**—It has been a rude awakening, but the man is evidently awake; and he is so sobered that he is willing to pass for just what he is. He will return making no claim, but seeking pardon and compassion. All sin is sin against heaven and God.

"He who breaks the flowers in God's garden,
Breaks more than flowers."

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

I am no more worthy to be called thy son.—He does not give up sonship, but he claims nothing from it. There is nothing he can claim, unless it be a father's love. Even a servant's place must be a matter of grace.

20. And he arose and came.—He carried his resolution into effect. It took some courage to go back; it was so different from his coming out! Then he was richly caparisoned and haughty, and now he is a pauper in rags! But if he ever returned it must be his own doing. The father wisely compels his son to do his own choosing in this matter. If at any previous stage a coach had been sent to bring the prodigal home, he probably would have run away again. A man must come to himself, and come home of himself, before he ever can be trusted to stay. **But while he was yet afar off.**—Here is one of the most precious lessons ever taught. The son did not know it, but all the time the father was watching and longing for him. The parent could not directly compel the son to love the home, or make him turn his face toward it; but he could keep the home open, and go forth to meet him. Even so the Father in heaven comes a long way to meet his own. **I have sinned.**—The son does not forget his prayer; in the presence of such love he breathes it more fervently; but the father interrupts, and does not give him time to complete it. **Bring forth the best robe.**—The rags must come off; and a ring, especial mark of acceptance and favor, goes on his hand; and shoes, tokens of a free man, are put on. "The sense of the whole verse is: God will restore the penitent, and give him, out of love, all that is necessary to mark him as a son" (*Schaff*).

23, 24. Bring the fatted calf.—It was a time for feasting. The father felt that all should rejoice. So when every sinner turns to Christ, there should be joy in the church on earth, as there is in the penitent's heart, and in heaven. **For this my son was dead.**—Indeed to him the son was dead, he was alienated; their lives no more met. Now he lived with him, and was alive to him. So truly he was lost, but now is found. It was a glorious restoration. And one expression speaks an endless joy. Estate is all gone, and all henceforth received must be of grace; precious years most sadly wasted can not be recalled; but that which is most precious yet remains—a heavenly relationship;—it is still "*My son.*"

POINTS TO NOTE.

I. A Path Chosen. What demand does the younger son make of his father? How does the father treat his request? What does the young man do? What misfortunes befall him? What does he do when he finds himself in want? Why was his work especially degrading? What does he remember of the bounty of his father's house? **II. A Path Retraced.**—What decision does he make? What does he intend to request? How does his father meet him? What does the son say? Does the father appear to give him opportunity to ask for a servant's place? What does he command to be done? What reason for joy does he give?

COLLECT.

O blessed Father: May a vision of our beautiful home make us feel how barren is our earthly life, and how much we have lost in departing from thee. May the consciousness of what we might have been make us feel how sadly we have wasted our substance, and how poor we have come to be. But may the glad tidings that home still awaits us, and our Father will welcome, bring us to our better selves, and heaven, and God. O bring us all safe home; through Jesus' love. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. SOWING THE WIND.—1. *Every Soul Makes its Own Choice of Character.*—The profligate had one hour of ecstasy, the elder brother a whole life of peace. A consistent Christian may not have rapture, but he has what is better, calmness—God's serene and perpetual presence (*Robertson*).

2. *Man Proposes.*—On the eve of Napoleon's departure for Russia, where with his "grand army" he intended to subdue the Czar and his subjects, he was detailing the scheme to a noble lady. Startled by his arrogance, she tried to check him, quoting, "Man proposes and God disposes." "Madam, I propose and dispose, too," he replied, in haughty anger. A few months later, the snows and storms of that terrible winter, wrecking the finest and costliest military expedition of the day, gave Napoleon a decisive and providential answer (*The Sunday Companion*).

II. REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.—1. *The Effects of Sin.*—The downward career is swift. A man may fall in a moment a distance down the mountain side which it has taken hours to climb; and with danger, too, of permanent injury, if not death. One after another, the prodigal lost money, friends, self-respect. He might regain home, but never his lost inheritance; forgiveness, but not a stainless record. God will forgive, when nature will not, and many truly repentant and forgiven ones suffer till death the results of their misdeeds.

2. *He Came to Himself.*—He had been a gay pleasure seeker, a debauchee; a beggar—at least a servant,—now he is again in memory the child of a loving, bountiful father.

"This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow, is remembering happier things."

"Bygone years to a sinner are an ascending incline toward sunnier days."

3. *The Sinner is Homeless and Restless.*—We could call into court nearly as many witnesses as there have been hunters of happiness. Ask the statesman, and as we wish him a happy New Year, Lord Dundas would answer, "It had need to be happier than the last, for I never knew one happy day in it." The lawyer? The most successful might answer as Lord Eldon was recording, while the whole Bar envied the Chancellor, "A few weeks will send me to dear Encombe, as a short resting place betwixt vexation and the grave." The millionaire? Mr. Rothschild would answer: "Happy! when just as you are going to dine, you have a letter placed in your hand, saying, 'If you don't send me £500, I will blow your brains out.'" Ask the world-famed warrior, and get for answer the *Miserere* of the Emperor-Monk, Charles V., or the sigh of a broken heart from St. Helena. Shall we never learn that there is nothing but misery while we are away from God (*W. M. Taylor*).

III. AN ANCHOR IN THE STORM.—1. *The Possibility of Return.*—He knows that his father is kind. He has a hope, at least, that he will receive him. What will he choose? Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the greatest dramatist and orator of Ireland for a hundred years, sank under the power of strong drink, until he became bankrupt in character and purse, and would have been seized by the sheriff's officer had not death stepped in and claimed the prisoner. Another grasped the possibility. A youth in Christ's College, Cambridge, was wasting time and talents. Aroused by a sharp rebuke from a fellow student, he formed a new plan for life. It was William Paley, whose writings on Christian Evidences have rendered the greatest service to the cause of truth.

2. *The Wise Decision.*—It may be a deep repentance that ruminates in sorrow over the past; but a more effective one which seeks, as far as possible, to undo the past by the most earnest use of the future (*Whedon*). An English soldier was left by a retreating army to die. As he lay with strength fast ebbing, a ravenous bird of prey alighted before him, awaiting his death. The horror of the thought gave him energy; he rose, and was saved.

3. *The Joy of Repentance.*—There are

"Tears that are sweeter far
Than the world's mad laughters are,"

It is a mutilated *Miserere* which omits the verse, "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." It is recorded of a defeated general that he roused himself only twice from the stupor of coming death, once to say, "Who would have thought it?" Later, with more animation, "We will do better next time." See the twofold nature of repentance, the humiliation of the beaten soldier as he comes to himself; his hope through Christ as he catches the music of the march of victory (*Bishop Alexander*).

IV. SURE AND STEADFAST.—1. *The Invisible Cord of Love.*—It drew the prodigal homeward. "Quitting his native chimney among the grassy fields of Holland, the stork pursues the retiring summer, and catches it in Nubia or Morocco. There he revels until, on some brilliant May morning, the boys look up and shout their welcome, as with noisy outcry an old acquaintance drops down upon the gable, drawn back to the old anchorage by a hawser of a thousand miles, and the feathery sails once more are furled."

2. *The Father's Reception.*—He supplies his needs, he adorns and honors him. The prodigal comes as the sinner should come, humbly, with love for his father's home, and confidence in his father, though not with a full sense of his kindness. This he comes to know better as the robe is placed upon him, and the ring on his finger. An Arabian tale tells of a guardian spirit who gave his protege a ring which tightened painfully on his finger when he went against the wishes of his protector. "Beautiful emblem of the new heart and tender conscience which God's grace brings to the penitent and believing soul."

3. *The Father's Joy.*—When I stood in Antwerp, and heard the chimes of some fifty or sixty bells, I could not bear to go any further, lest I should get out of the sound of those exquisite peals that rolled every hour, and half-hour, and quarter-hour, filling the air with a weird and yet wonderful sweetness; and I thought to myself, "There, just such are the thoughts of a father's heart, when it is lifted up with hope, and all things ring at every hour, and half-hour, and quarter-hour, and minute, of the return of some wandering child" (*Beecher*).

4. A divine epitome of the wandering of man and the love of God, such as no ear of man has ever elsewhere heard, such as no literature has ever equaled. Put into one scale all that Confucius, or Zoroaster, or Socrates ever said or wrote,—many beautiful and holy words,—and put in the other the parable of the Prodigal Son alone, with all that it means, can one doubt which scale would outweigh the other in eternal preciousness—in divine adaptation to the wants of man (*Farrar*).

5. "Come home, come home,
There is bread and to spare
And a warm welcome there.
Then to friends reconciled—
Oh, prodigal child, come home."

DOWNWARD!

DESIRE.	Ver. 12.
DEMAND.	Ver. 12.
DIVISION.	Ver. 12.
DEPARTURE.	Ver. 13.
DEBAUCHERY.	Ver. 13.
DESTITUTION.	Ver. 14.
DEGRADATION.	Ver. 15.
DESERTION.	Ver. 16.
DYING.	Ver. 17.

RISING!

REJOICING.	Ver. 24.
RESTORATION.	Ver. 22.
RECEPTION.	Ver. 20.
REPENTANCE.	Ver. 21.
RETURN.	Ver. 20.
REMEMBRANCE.	Ver. 17.
RESOLUTION.	Ver. 18.
REFLECTION.	Ver. 17.

—*Sunday school Times.*

LESSON IV. APRIL 26.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Ye can not serve God and mammon.
—Luke xvi. 13.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Luke xvi. 19-31.

Time.—Very soon after the last lesson, probably December, A. D. 29. **Place.**—Perea, beyond Jordan.

19 There Now there was a certain rich man, which and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared faring sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lăz'a-rus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which crumbs that fell from the rich man's table: Moreover yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into A'bră-hăm's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried;

EXPLANATORY.

I. WEALTH AND WANT.

19. There was a certain rich man.—The name of this man is not given. Dives, as he is sometimes called, is merely the Latin name for *rich*, or *rich man*. **And he was clothed in purple.**—His outer robe was of silk or wool, dyed with the royal purple—a color most highly esteemed and sought. Its contrast with the white of the fine linen undergarment gave fine effect. In dress the man was ostentatious. **Faring sumptuously every day.**—He banqueted every day; it was an unceasing round. He lived a sensuous and sensual life, using his wealth wholly to gratify himself; he consumed the toil and tribute of others on his own appetites and lusts, and truly made no return. Every selfish rich man will find a fearful reckoning when accounts are balanced.

20, 21. A certain beggar named Lazarus.—Jesus gives the name of the beggar, perhaps to indicate his character. The Greek name "Lazarus" is abbreviated from the Hebrew *Eleazer—God helps*. The whole tone of the parable indicates that he was patient, humble, and devout. **Laid at his gate.**—At the great outer door or portal to the house. In wealthy eastern houses a hall way commonly led to an open inner court. **Full of sores.**—It may be that poverty and starvation was the cause of his physical condition, but very likely some incurable and ulcerous disease was the cause of his pauperism. Some pitying friends, deeming him especially worthy of charity, had laid him at the rich man's gate. **Desiring to be fed with the crumbs.**—The broken fragments, the refuse of the rich dinners, which the servants would carelessly toss to him. The language would indicate that he was never particularly attended to. **Even the dogs came.**—Eastern cities abound in dogs, mangy, starved, unowned. In their degradation they serve a most useful purpose as scavengers. Whether they soothed him with their soft tongues, or added to his misery, can not be decided. Meyer and Lange take the latter view; and Spence, Alford, and others, the former. The one clear point is that his condition was wretched and pitiable in the extreme.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, April 20.—The Wisdom of the Unjust Steward Commended (Luke xvi. 1-9).
Tuesday, April 21.—Faithful in Little, Faithful in Much (Luke xvi. 10-18).
Wednesday, April 22.—A Rich Man's Failure (Luke xvi. 19-31).
Thursday, April 23.—The Prayer of Agur (Prov. xxx. 1-9).
Friday, April 24.—The Rich Refusing (Mark x. 17-25).
Saturday, April 25.—The Poor Receiving (Mark x. 46-52).
Sunday, April 26.—The Golden City (Rev. xxi. 17-27).

23 And in hell (Hades) he lift (lifted) up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth A'bră-hăm afar off, and Lăz'a-rus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father A'bră-hăm, have mercy on me, and send Lăz'a-rus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented (in anguish) in this flame.

25 But A'bră-hăm said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lăz'a-rus in like man-

II. HEAVEN AND HELL.

22. It came to pass that the beggar died.—Worn out with disease, he was kindly released. Nothing was said of his burial; that was unimportant. Men said he had better be dead, and men spoke the truth. **He was carried away by the angels.**—Probably to be understood literally. The contrast of the reversed position begins already: rich men were pallbearers of their associate, but the beggar was borne by angels (*Riddle*). An important and most fitting part is this of the work of those who minister to heirs of salvation (Heb. i. 13). "We may infer from this that attendance on the dying saints, and accompanying them to their blissful abode, is part of the joyful ministrations of the angels" (*Kendrick*). **Into Abraham's bosom.**—This term was used by the Jews indifferently, with "the garden of Eden," or "under the throne of glory," for the home of happy but waiting souls (*P. C.*). Abraham was in Paradise, and he welcomed next to himself the humble and holy who followed him from earth. **The rich man also died, and was buried.**—There is a terrible irony here, an awful comparison and contrast. The human procession and pageantry of woe was for the rich man, what the carrying by the angels was to Lazarus—it was *his* equivalent (*P. C.*).

23. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes.—Not in *hell;* the Greek word used here never has this meaning. Hades answers to the Hebrew *sheol*, and means simply the *realm of the dead*, the universal abode of departed spirits. It is conceived to be under the earth, and having its two compartments of Elysium or Paradise, and Tartarus or Gehenna. In this respect the Greek and Hebrew conceptions are essentially the same. Lazarus with Abraham was in Paradise; the rich man was in Gehenna, amid torments; but both were in Hades, and so near that they could see and converse with each other. Under the ordinary forms of imaginative conception, the Saviour sets forth great spiritual realities. These are the radical and permanent distinction of character and destiny. The lifting up of the eyes shows Paradise conceived as in the higher, and Gehenna in the lower part of Hades (*Prof. Kendrick*).

III. WOE AND WARNING.

24. Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus.—This teaching of exchanged conditions is intense and powerful.

> The man who heard no prayer of need,
> Is beggar now.

He did not care for the company of Lazarus once; he does now. It seems a cry of solitude. He asks not much,—a *little* gratification, and Lazarus may bring it. The connection of *thirst* and *flame* are significant,—

> The flames that devastate the soul,
> Are flames within.

This man in the earlier life had cultivated appetites and desires which there was nothing in the later to gratify. Even on earth there is hell. Appetites and passions rage on, enslaving and torturing men, when every kind of true gratification is gone. The drunkard is crazy for his drink, when the pleasures of taste have all perished. The miser grows haggard in his torturing clutch after gold, when he is dead to every use of money. We enter the other world as we leave this. The sensualist has learned to find all his joy in some sensual gratification. The devotee of fashion goes where his "refined delights" can never be repeated. The drunkard, and the avaricious, take

ner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art tormented. in anguish.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you can may not; neither can they be able, and that pass to us, that *would come* none may cross over from thence to us.

27 Then And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

DOGS LICKING THE SORES OF LAZARUS.

their appetites, but they go to a land where there are no distilleries, and where gold is never coined. There is a thirst that never dies; a fire that is not quenched.

25. Son, remember.—Here we come to the reason of this strange contrast of destinies. It should be noted that the rich man was not lost merely because he was rich. Abraham, at this moment conspicuous in Paradise, had been very wealthy. Lazarus was not saved merely because he was a beggar; poverty in itself will never save anybody. **That thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things.**—"You lived for joys that belonged to earth alone; you have had them; they are past now. The joys you loved are ended; the life you lived is all over; the good things on which your heart was set, *you have had.*" He had fastened himself utterly to the world, and when earth failed him, all was gone. In time of storm, sailors sometimes lash themselves to their vessel to keep from being swept overboard. All very well, if the ship weathers the storm; but if the ship goes down, there is no escape for them. I once saw a grape vine growing over a large brush heap. It was a luxuriant vine, but it had so grown into the brush,—it had fastened itself by so many tendrils, that it could not be separated; and the inexorable fate of the brush heap was to be burned up. The rich man is not drawn as a man with strikingly evil qualities; he was only one of those men who are often esteemed shrewd, who neglect all that pertains to those higher activities that link us to the future; who make the most of *this* world, and live their life out *here.* **Lazarus in like manner evil things.**—Surely he had not received his good things. We must read between the lines here. Jesus is contrasting the lives all through. "You were rich toward the world, and poor towards God. Lazarus was poor towards the world, and rich toward God. You lived for the sensual and the temporal; he for the spiritual and eternal. Now he is comforted."

26. Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.—A great gulf in *character.* This does separate people impassably. Lives lived with divergent objects separate farther and farther as the years go by. It is fearful to think that there is a time when tastes, and affections, and habits, are *fixed,*—when change of life and state is no longer possible, when we must forever go in the course we have taken, and grow as we have begun. The *permanence of character* may well cause sober thought. There comes a time when men do not "pass over."

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 A'bra-ham / But A'bra-ham saith, unto him, They have Mō'ses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father A'brăh-hăm; but if one went unto / go to them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Mō'ses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though / if one rose / rise from the dead.

27, 28. I pray thee therefore.—Let us put the natural and best construction upon this. The man still cared for his brethren, and wished they might be spared his misery. There is no impassable gulf between heaven and earth, and he thinks a messenger may be sent *there*.

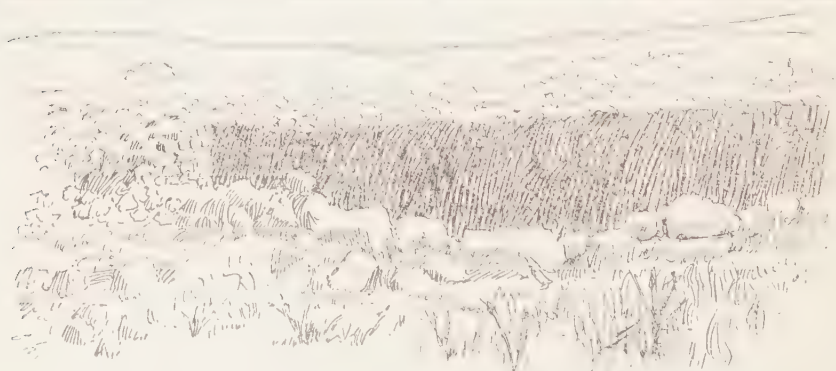
29-31. They have Moses and the prophets.—God has made an equal and adequate provision for his people. They are warned, if they will hear words of truth and soberness. **But if one go to them from the dead.**—He thinks some striking and supernatural occurrence would arrest and save them. A miracle never converted any one—only the truth which the miracle attests can do that; and men may readily refuse the truth in the face of miracle, as has over and over been proven. **If they hear not Moses.**—There is more sober truth in these words than seems at first. We perhaps long for a voice from beyond the grave; but if our dearest friends came back we would be slow to accept their words,—we would fear they had only seen a vision or dreamed dreams. No, if these brethren would not hear Moses and the prophets, they would hear no one. And if *we* will not trust Christ and his apostles, we can never trust.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Rich and Poor. 19-22. Describe the condition of the rich man. Of the beggar. Which is named? What was the beggar's only request? What became of him? Of the rich man? **2. Comforted and Tormented.** Whom does the rich man see afar off? What does he ask? What is his present condition? What does Abraham answer with regard to the justice of this? What as to the possibility of granting his request? What does the rich man then ask? What is the answer? What does he further urge? What is Abraham's final reply.

COLLECT.

Holy Father, teach us to use the world, and not abuse ourselves in using it. Help us to find joys that never fail; to love the flowers that bloom, the streams that flow, in paradise. May we hear, and take as life's true guides, the teachers thou hast sent. And when the life on earth is done, may angels bear us home to thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.



CHORAZIN.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A CONTRAST ON EARTH.—1. There is no sin in the possession of riches, but dangers to be guarded against. The poor man may have his heart set on things of earth, on wealth, as strongly as the one who possesses them. Then if he misses them he misses all, for the good things which he has not sought can never be his.

2. The rich man was not commanded, like another, to sell all that he had, and give to the poor. It was a very easy test which was given him. One poor and suffering man was laid at his gate, and he did not stand the test. "A stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, ye clothed me not."

3. *The Mockery of Decking a Dying Soul.*—It was an old Scythian custom that when the head of a house died, he was dressed in his finest dress, and set in his chariot, and carried about to his friends' houses; and each placed him at his table's head, and feasted in his honor. Suppose you were offered this: You shall die slowly, your blood shall daily grow cold, your flesh petrify, your heart beat at last only as a rusted group of iron valves; but, day by day, your body shall be dressed more gaily and set in higher chariots. Men shall bow before it, build palaces for it, feast with it; your soul shall stay enough within it to know what they do, no more. Would you accept the offer? Yet practically every man accepts it who desires to advance in life without knowing what life is; who means only that he is to get more horses, more footmen, more fortune, more public honor and—*not* more personal soul. He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace (*Ruskin*).

4. *The Other Extreme.*—Here was a rare gem enshrined in a wretched casket. Beggars were many, and there was no provision for them, no public charities; the gospel brought these; in those days the poor were neglected. Yet in "God's annals" the beggar has a name, and the rich man none. But with all the gospel teaching and effort of to-day many worthy poor still suffer. "Alas the heart dies down at such contrasts. Who could look on two such pictures in the same hour, and admit that things are as they ought to be in this world? And if at such a moment he remembers the words of the parable, it can not but occur to him that there must be a hidden law of adjustment, whose working will be revealed in due season" (*Morgan Dix*).

5. *The Law of Compensation.*—Two neighbors had met with great contrasts of fortune. The prosperous man lived for this world alone. The one who had suffered misfortune was a trustful Christian. "Ah," said the rich man, "it quite seems as though, while I have the best of everything, you have only trials." "Yes," said the other, "but on my side of the scales you must add peace of conscience, the daily presence of Christ, and heaven, and then you may calculate who is to be envied" (*Sunday-school Journal*). There is never a "might have been" that touches with a sting, but reveals also to us an inner glimpse of the wide and beautiful "may be." It is all there; somebody else has it now while we wait (*Mrs. Whitney*).

6. Over the triple doorways of the cathedral of Milan are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "That which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "That which troubles us is but for a moment." But beneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal" (*Christian Age*).

7. *Just Beginning Life.*—We say it not of the babe in its nurse's arms, but of the youth who stands at the end of his school days of years, it may be, of preparation. What is all our earth life but a preparation? Some day each will know that the last lesson has been given, the last opportunity past, and the valedictory spoken. Will the great Teacher say that the course has been honorably finished? So Lazarus entered at last into life, and had he not high honor? Like Moses

To lie in state while angels wait.

8. But the rich man had a great funeral, attended to his grave by the high of earth, while his spirit drifted out into the darkness alone. Two boats were filled with

passengers from a wrecked vessel. It was night, and they could not keep together long. Those in one boat discovered that several bags of gold had been thrown in, but a very small supply of food. One of the men lifted the bags, calling to those in the other boat, "£5,000 gold for one cask of bacon." But the others knew too well the value of that cask, and the passengers in the first boat were hidden in the darkness of night with their gold.

II. A CONTRAST BEYOND.—1. Could the beggared soul of the rich man expect that his request would be granted, that one would be sent from far to bring comfort to him; to him, who had not moved so far as the gate of his mansion to help a fellowman in need?

2. "This is the only prayer to a saint recorded in Scripture?" Its answer is not encouraging. There is no illumination of inspiration thrown across that parting gulf, only, "Son, remember." And that is answer—that is punishment enough.

"Sad memory weaves no veil to hide the past."

3. *A Gulf Between.*—It is not a gulf which God has made, but which man has placed between his own soul and his Maker. Can he depend on moral deeds for salvation? They will sooner save from decay the brain which planned and the hand which executed them, than they will save the soul whose real interest is in other things. The soul which can not enter a prayer-meeting *can not* enter heaven. It is not the arbitrary will of a judge, but the self-execution of an inevitable law.

4. *A Plea for Others.*—Even human affection unblessed by God will add to one's possibilities of hopeless suffering. There is something, more or less, of selfishness even in this plea, and an indirect justification of himself, as though he had not had warning enough. But no, they have Moses and the prophets, the Old Testament alone was enough. How much more have we?

5. *A Voice from the Grave.*—True were Christ's words! A Lazarus *did* rise, and they sought only to thrust him back into the tomb; and him who had the power over death they did slay. You remember the description in the Book of Job, pronounced by one of the greatest writers in our language, "unequaled in fearful sublimities." "Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall man be more pure than his Maker?" Do we need a ghost to tell us that? Oh! the spectre might come, but it could tell us nothing to make heaven more attractive, or hell more terrible than is delineated in the Bible—nothing to make it more certain that unless you repent you shall surely perish (*H. Melvill*).

6. Be not deceived by distance; you may touch
The hand of one whose soul is out of reach.

He who builds on apparent or material facts may be a good scientist, but he is sure to make momentous mistakes. Things are not as they seem on the surface. We stand side by side, and yet live in different worlds. We walk our daily paths together, and yet are going opposite ways. There are husbands and wives who have walked the whole earthly pilgrimage together, and yet have been separating farther every hour. Two aged men are side by side at the close of the trial of life; the one only a step from the beautiful banks of the River of Life; and the other so far away that he never can reach them.

LESSON V. MAY 3.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Lord, increase our faith. —Luke xvii. 5.

FAITH.

Luke xvii. 5-19.

Time.—March, A. D. 30. **Place.**—Jesus is journeying along the borders of Samaria and Galilee. He will cross the Jordan into Perea, and then journey south by Jericho to Jerusalem.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, If ye had (have) faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might (would) say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked (rooted) up, by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey (would have obeyed) you.

7 But which (who is there) of you, having a servant plowing or feeding (keeping) cattle, sheep, that will say unto him by and by, when he is come in from the field, Go (Come straightway) and sit down to meat?

I. POWER OF FAITH.

EXPLANATORY.

5. Increase our faith.—Jesus has just been teaching high lessons. A man had better be sunk in the deep sea, dragged down by a millstone, "unwept, unhonored, and unknelled," than mislead, or cause a little one to stumble. If a persistently offending brother sins against another seven times every day (and seven denotes *completeness*—any number of times), if he repent each time, he must be forgiven. . . . The expression teaches that all faith is one—the difference is in degree. There may be great faith, little faith, strong faith, weak faith. "Saving faith," is a faith in Jesus strong enough to let him command and control the life. "There is progression in the life of faith as in every other life; and this progress is even the condition and the sign of life. Faith may increase in certainty, clearness, vividness, and energy" (*Vinet*).

6. If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed.—Jesus does not directly answer this prayer. He goes on to teach that a small measure of true faith should keep them from offences, and in the way of service. If they hold true to the light they have, they shall in due time have more. Dean Plumptre says, "They were asking for faith, not only in measure sufficient for obedience, but for a faith that would exclude all uncertainty and doubt. They were looking for the crown of labor *before* their work was done, for the wreath of the conqueror *before* they had fought the battle. In other words, the 'increase of faith' for which the apostles prayed was only to come through obedience to their Master's will." The grain of mustard seed is very small, but it has real power and strong vitality in it. Under proper circumstances it grows to be a vigorous and prominent shrub. So a slight *real* faith will grow and achieve what seems impossible. **To this sycamine tree.**—The black mulberry. Propagated by cuttings it is a hearty grower, striking deep and broad roots. If such a work as rooting out that tree and planting it in the sea, *lay in the way of your proper duty and service*, you could do it.

7-10. Who is there of you having a servant plowing.—The connection: When your faith *has* so increased that you

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, April 27.—Duty in Forgiving and Serving (Luke xvii. 1-10).
Tuesday, April 28.—The Lepers (Luke xvii. 11-19).
Wednesday, April 29.—As in the Days of Noah (Luke xvii. 20-27).
Thursday, April 30.—Coming Judgment (Luke xvii. 28-37).
Friday, May 1.—Let All the Peoples Praise Thee (Ps. lxvii).
Saturday, May 2.—If any Man Wills to Do (John vii. 1-17).
Sunday, May 3.—Questionings at Jerusalem (John vii. 25-36).

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank [that the] servant because he did the things that were commanded [him]? I trow not.

10 So likewise [Even so] ye [also], when ye shall have done all [those the] things [which that] are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which [it] was our duty to do.

11 And it came to pass, as [he went they were on the way] to Je-ru'sa-lĕm, that he [passed was passing] through the midst of Sa-mā'rĭ-a and Găl'ĭ-lee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

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can do what now seems impossible, be not puffed up, as though you had laid the Lord under obligations to you (*Butler*). The general sense of the parable is clear. It teaches two things,—*patience* and *humility*,—to all who would ever be Christ's disciples. It reminds men that his service is arduous and continuous; not only is there hard toil in the fields during the day, but often further duties in the eventide (*P. C.*). The master in this parable is simply true to the character of the ordinary master,—he does not turn himself into a servant, for the servant's sake. **Make ready wherewith I may sup.**—This picture of the man who has no care for his weary servant, is hardly true of Him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. It is rather such a contrast as we find in the unjust judge (Luke xviii. 5), and the ungracious neighbor. The servant comes home and patiently serves an unappreciative master. How much more faithfully should we serve a master who appreciates all we do, and who himself has rendered service which ours can never match! **When we have done all the things that are commanded.**—No feeling of proud complacency must ever possess us. At best we are imperfect servants. We never can make up the undone duty of yesterday, for all that we can do to-day is to-day's duty. The Master talks of great *rewards* for the faithful; but they are not *earned*,—they are gifts of his love. He promises a blest approval; but it is because he chooses to rate our services so high, and forgives so much. All is of grace; at best we are unprofitable servants.

> No goodness of my own I boast, no wealth of light and sweetness;
> *He* giveth what I need the most, and fills my incompleteness.

II. MISERY AND MERCY.

11-18. On the way to Jerusalem.—Though for a space he retired from Jerusalem, yet his closing work, near at hand, was there. He was now journeying on the border line of Samaria and Galilee. **There met him ten men that were lepers.**—These were outside an unnamed village, which they dare not enter. **Which stood afar off.**—So the law required (Lev. xiii. 45, 46). The estimates of the required distance vary from one hundred and fifty paces to a few feet. This disease, practically incurable, is one of the most loathsome. It has been called a sort of *dry rot* of the body. Beginning in the skin, it slowly ate its way through the tissues to the bones and joints, and even to the marrow, rotting the body piecemeal. Extremities, such as the fingers, would drop off. The features would become fearfully distorted. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes were attacked in turn, till at last consumption or dropsy brought welcome death (*G.*). It is inheritable and communicable; a fearful type of sin. **They lifted up their voices.**—They dared not approach, and so they made loud calls. They knew whom they wanted, and what they wanted. What mercy *could* a leper ask but to be cleansed? Dr. Trumbull says: It required very little religion to cry out for help.

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jē'sus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go and shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And he fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Sa-măr'ĭ-tan.

17 And Jē'sus answering said Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

Men who never think of God at any other time are quick to call on him in sudden danger, in helpless need, or in crushing sorrow.

"There is no God," the foolish saith;
But none, "There is no sorrow."
And nature oft the cry of faith
In bitter need will borrow.

Eyes which the preacher could not school
By wayside graves are raised;
And hearts say, "God be pitiful!"
Which ne'er said, "God be praised!"

14. He said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests.—The law required the cleansed leper to present himself to the priests that his case might be examined, and the fact of his cleansing determined (Lev. xiv. 2–7). And this is what Jesus bids these unchanged lepers to do! How the multitude must have jeered as they saw the poor fellows limping off to find the priest! It was a sharp and direct trial of faith. Yet the fact that here was the *only* hope, gave power to the command.

Dear Lord! thy call so absolute doth try my weak heart so!
And yet, apart from thee I have no other where to go.

As they went they were cleansed.—It is ever so. As they walked along obedient to Christ's words, a fresh and healthful life flowed in their veins, and they became conscious of healing. Professor Riddle says, It is not necessary to wait for a knowledge of all truth, or even of much truth, in order to be able to believe and be saved. When one has really believed what the Lord hath said to him, and acted accordingly, as real belief will lead him to do, then the spiritual healing promised to faith will be given by the Saviour.

15, 16. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed.—They probably had not gone far from the village when the fact of their healing became apparent. At once they separated. Hitherto they had been common outcasts and companions in misery; but when cleansed, Jewish blood asserted itself, and the Samaritan was left alone. Of course the nine Jews were joyous and grateful; but they went on their ways. But the Samaritan could not go on; his heart is broken in gratitude, and he must find his benefactor—

And at his blessed feet unload
A thankful heart.

17-19. Were not the ten cleansed?—Here is an illustration of the fact that Jesus sometimes expects a service that he does not expressly command. He who always waits for a 'thus saith the Lord,' will sometimes come short of doing his Lord's will. Jesus had not commanded these lepers when cleansed to come back to him, and

19 And he said unto him, Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

yet he seems to have expected them. He spoke tenderly and graciously to the one who returned; bade him go now to the priest, without whose certificate he could not be restored to society; and then spoke words that reached deeper than any bodily healing,—"**Thy faith hath made thee whole.**"

LEPERS OUTSIDE THE GATES.

POINTS TO NOTE.

I. A Lesson on Faith. 5–10. What request did the apostles make of Christ? What did Christ say they might accomplish by faith? What treatment would a master not give a servant? What would he properly expect of him? Is he under obligation for service done according to agreement? What may we say of ourselves when we have done our full duty? Do we ever do this? **2. An Illustration of Faith.** 11–19. Where were Jesus and the apostles going? Through what provinces did they pass? Whom did they meet? Was it a leper? Why did they stand afar off? What did they say? What did Jesus command? What happened to the lepers? What did one return to do? What was he? What did Jesus ask? What did he say to the one who returned? What is our first duty when a blessing has been received?

COLLECT.

Our heavenly Father, help us to know that in the true life every duty is joyous, and brings its own reward; and if, in the disordered life of earth, the burden falls heavy upon us, may we know that thy compassion will make amends. Give to us more and more the joy of being grateful. May every gift and grace be a token unto us of a great goodness and love that exists for us, and holds exhaustless blessings. Teach us to return in increasing love to our Great Deliverer, forever and forever. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE POSSIBILITIES OF FAITH.—1. *Possibilities of Growth.* As a man beginning life without sixpence has made a fortune of tens of thousands, so he who at first has little faith may become like Abraham or the woman of Canaan. Coal beds may be exhausted, gold and silver mines abandoned as not worth working any longer; but faith is a mine that can not be exhausted (*Griffith*). The way to have a strong faith is to think nothing of yourself (*Dr. Gordon*). Men would first see and then believe; but they must believe and then see. A constant faith begets a constant peace (*Mason*).

2. *Effect of Faith.*—How is an earthly parent affected by a child that comes earnestly petitioning, and in humble and obedient spirit? The heart of the parent is drawn to the child, and the request will be granted unless, looking the field over, *there is something better*. Learn this well: God can grant blessings to obedient faith, which he never could grant to the child of indifference and doubt. Note how happy in spirit the men and women of strong child-like faith always are.

3. *A Waiting Faith.*—Should we be willing to receive a reward for which we have not toiled and waited? Or for which we have not at least the spirit to toil and wait?

> What right have I to be weary, when my work is scarce begun?
> What right have I to be weary, while aught remains to be done?
> I shall be weary at even, and rest will the sweeter be;
> And blessed will peace be to them that have won the victory,
> But now is the time for battle, now must the storm be brest;
> And now is the time for labor,—hereafter remaineth rest.

4. *Unprofitable at Best.*—(1) Our principal care here must be to do the duty of our position and leave it to our Master to give us the comfort of it, when and how he thinks fit. (2) When we have been employed in the duties of religious conversation, that will not excuse us from the exercises of devotion; when we have been working for God, still we must be waiting on God. (3) We expect God's favor, not because we have by our services made him a debtor to us, but because he has by his promises made himself a debtor to his own honor (*Henry*).

II. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.—1. *Leprosy and Sin.*—Leprosy has ever been justly made the especial symbol of sin. Leprosy was hereditary; so is sin. It was insidious and all-pervading; so is sin. It was incurable by man; so is sin. Therefore symbolic penalties were attached to it, the separation of the leper from intercourse with others illustrating the truth that sin cuts off from God's favor and excludes from his presence (*Eugene Stock*). Lepers, too, like sinners, band together. If they were to be healed they must, as must sinners also, accept Christ's word in faith, obey,—that is, use all the means at hand, and obey *just as they are*.

2. *The Lepers Took Christ at His Word.*—A captain coming in from the tideless Mediterranean to a port of the Atlantic Coast is told as he anchors at its entrance, "Be ready at a certain hour and the tide will bring you in." Though this is against previous experience, and he is in the dark, he obeys. Sails are ready, anchor weighed, and he is floated over the harbor bar (*S. S. Journal*).

3. It is the faith that *acts*, that saves. Columbus might have believed there were lands beyond the sea, but his faith would have been of no profit if he had not sailed. Sometimes a very weak faith will save. Two men were wrecked on a desert island. One declared that he believed a frail boat which they possessed would bear them to an adjacent land; and yet he was not sure, and could hardly venture it. The other thought it barely possible the boat might reach shore; and since the alternative was to stay and perish, he chose to launch forth. He lived to bring help, but too late, to the man who stayed behind.

III. DANGER OF INGRATITUDE.—1. *Peril of Gratification.*—The moment when a man gets what he wants is a testing one. The release from need, the cessation of desire, may lead to a change, indeed to a revolution, of feeling. A friend who was a great necessity, is a necessity no longer; and one whom we clung to as a benefactor, has nothing further that we care to receive. An obsequious clerk of a merchant who

generously raised him to fortune, forgot his employer when he was old and penniless. A city pastor found that in every hundred that professed "death-bed repentance," and then recovered, over ninety went back to their old lives unchanged. Not one in ten remained to give God glory.

2. *There is Joy in Gratitude.*—The ungrateful heart misses life's richest joy. A small gift makes a grateful child very happy; a large one soon leaves the ungrateful, sullen, and discontented. "Ingratitude turns gold to lead" in the receiver's hands; it is "sharper than a serpent's tooth," to one who gives. He who takes gifts from heaven, as swine eat acorns under the broad-armed oaks, never looking up to see whence they came, misses all that is best in life. Gratitude is *appreciation;* and to appreciate as we may the goodness and love of heaven—is heaven.

I love thy gift, because I see.
In it thy thoughtful love of me.

3. *We Have Reason to be Grateful.*—I fear we are more ungrateful than the nine lepers. For which of the two is better off,—the man who loses a good thing, and then gets it back again, or the man who never loses it at all, but enjoys it all his life? Those lepers had been through a miserable time; they might feel that their affliction was a set-off against the fortune of recovery; they had bad years to balance their good ones. But we—how many of us have had only good ones? In health and safety most of us grow up: forced, it is true, to hard work; but that is a blessing; for what better thing for a man, soul and body, than to be compelled to hard work? Alas! only by sad losses are most of us taught the blessings we have had (*Kingsley*)!

4. *Causes of Ingratitude.*—In each of the nine lepers was a source of ingratitude. (1) One is *callous.* He did not feel his misery as much as some, nor is he much stirred now by his return to health. Sullen, torpid, stony men are thankless. (2) One is *thoughtless.* He is more like the shifting sand than hard stone, but he never reflects, nor recollects. The unreflecting are ungrateful. (3) One is *proud.* He has not had more than his merit in being healed. Why should he be thankful for what his respectability and importance more than deserved? Only the humble-hearted are truly grateful. (4) One is *envious.* Though healed, he has not all that some others have. They are younger, or stronger, or have more friends to welcome them. Envy sours the milk of thankfulness. (5) One is *cowardly.* The Healer is scorned and hated. The expression of gratitude may bring some hatred on himself. The craven is always a mean ingrate. (6) One is *calculating*—the result of acknowledging the benefit. Perhaps some claim of tribute, or discipleship, may arise. (7) One is *worldly.* Already he has purpose of business in Jerusalem, or plan of pleasures there, and he puts "sense before sentiment." (8) One is *gregarious.* He would have expressed gratitude if the other eight would, but he has no independence, no individuality. (9) One is *procrastinating.* By and bye. Meanwhile Christ asks, Where are the nine? and has passed from that scene forever (*Thomas*).

"The faith of the Head
May be faith that is dead;
The faith of the Heart
Is better in part;
But the faith of the Hand
Is the faith that will stand;
For the faith that will do
Must include the first two."

TEN HOPELESS HEALED: NINE FORGOT ONE FOUND JESUS

LESSON VI. MAY 10.

LESSONS ON PRAYER.

Luke xviii. 9-17.

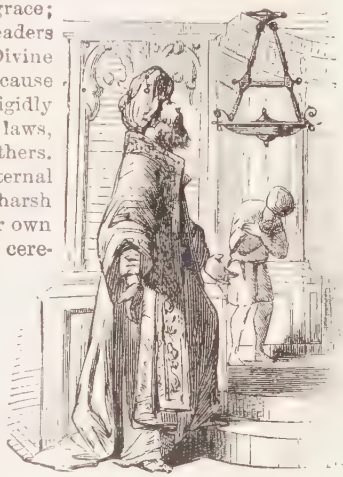
Time.—March, A. D. 30. **Place.**—On same journey as in last lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
—Luke xviii. 13.

This parable constitutes an important part of Jesus' defense—if we may dare use the word—for loving the sinful, for consorting with publicans and sinners. It tells men, in very simple language, how they are saved; not by works of righteousness which they have done, but by grace; in other words, by God's free mercy. The Pharisees, leaders of Jewish religious society, totally misunderstood this Divine truth. They claimed salvation on two grounds: (1) Because they belonged to the chosen race; (2) because they rigidly and minutely obeyed the precepts of a singular code of laws, many of which were devised by themselves and their fathers. On these two grounds they *claimed* salvation, that is, eternal blissful life. And they condemned, with a sweeping and harsh condemnation, all other peoples, and even those of their own race, who neglected rigidly to observe this burdensome ceremonial law which was so largely of their own making (*P. C.*).

Unto the parent heart, the proper child,
Who owns no grace, and extorts all as right,
Is not so dear, as one who rightly cares
To be forgiven, and feels what mercy means.



PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

9 And he spake also this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised set all others at nought:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phăr'-i-see, and the other a publican.

EXPLANATORY.

I. UNLOVELY BOASTING.

9. He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves.—It is wonderful still how many men see great evil in the world, and little or none in themselves. Most men who trust in themselves are not professedly Christians. They have a constant incentive to set a high estimate on their own goodness and worth. The true Christian has no call to exalt his own merit. **And set all others at naught.**—The rabbis invented the most high-flown designations for each other, such as "Light of Israel," "Uprooter of Mountains," "The Glory of the Law," "The Holy," etc.; but they described the vast mass of their countrymen as "accursed" for not knowing the law, and spoke of them as "empty cisterns," "people of the earth," etc. The Pharisee regarded with perfect self-complacency the assumed ruin and degradation of *all the rest of mankind* (*C. B.*).

10. Two men went up into the temple.—The temple was the appointed place of prayer. Thither devout Jews went, if near at hand, and toward it they turned their faces if they were

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, May 4.—The Unjust Judge, and Diverse Prayers (Luke xviii. 1-14).
Tuesday, May 5.—"Manifold More" (Luke xviii. 15-30).
Wednesday, May 6.—A Blind Man (Luke xviii. 31-43).
Thursday, May 7.—Not Wise to Compare (II. Cor. x. 12-18).
Friday, May 8.—When Weak, Then Strong (II. Cor. xii. 1-10).
Saturday, May 9.—No Righteousness Through Law (Gal. ii. 15-21).
Sunday, May 10.—A Prayer for Eternal Life (Mark x. 13-22).

PHARISEE PRAYING.

11 The Phăr'ĭ-see stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as [other the rest of] men, [are,] extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I [possess. get.]

13 [And But] the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his his] eyes unto heaven, but smote [upon] his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

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away. **The one a Pharisee.**—Of the highest and most respected religious class among the Jews. They were especial defenders of the *oral* law, as well as the written law of Moses, and they were always extreme, often puerile and tyrannous, in their observance of the ceremonial law. **The other a publican.**—A collector of taxes for the Roman Government. Often rapacious, they were, as a class, uniformly hated. Jewish publicans were especially hated by their own countrymen. They served the oppressors of their nation, and were regarded as renegades of the basest sort. Neither their alms nor their testimony might be received. They were religious and social outcasts.

11, 12. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself.—He took a prominent position; he was ostentatious, as compared with the publican. Nor do we think his prayer was necessarily silent, "such was never customary among the Jews." But his prayer was complacent and self-laudatory, he prayed with himself, and not to God. **I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men.**—He measures himself by imperfect men, and not by the perfect standard. Most men, even if they admit that they are not righteous, feel sure that they are not the worst men in the world; and they are glad of it. Men who will lie, boast that they do not steal. Men who will lie and steal, are glad that they are not drunkards. Men who know that they break every requirement of the moral law, thank God that they are not hypocrites; that they make no pretense to decency. Some men sit in their pews at church and congratulate themselves on their superiority to their neighbors; while others sit at home and find their chief satisfaction in reading in their morning paper of "another good man gone wrong." The echo of the Pharisee's prayer is in the air to-day (*Trumbull*). **Or even as this publican.**—And then, his eye lighting on the publican, he drags him into his prayer, making him to supply the dark background on which the bright colors of his own virtues shall more gloriously appear (*Trench*). **I fast twice in the week.**—Mondays and Thursdays were the usual fast days. He went far beyond what the law required, for that only named one fast day in the year—on the great day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29). So, too, in tithes; the law only required tithes of corn, wine, oil, and cattle, but the Pharisee descended to the humblest herb and made an ostentatious return of mint, anise, and cumin. He had done his duty, and more, too! Of course he had no sins to confess.

II. BECOMING CONTRITION.

13. But the publican standing afar off.—He took a retired and humble position. He felt unworthy to come into the presence of God. **Would not so much as lift up his eyes.**—The Jew usually stood with arms outspread, the palms turned upwards, as though to receive the gifts of heaven, and the eyes raised (*C. B.*). He smote his breast, a chiding stroke, significant of sterner strokes which he felt were deserved. **Be merciful to me a sinner.**—He did not say, "I have done some fair deeds; I am not altogether vile

14 I tell / say unto you, this / This man went down to his house justified rather / rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and / humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 And they brought unto him also infants, / their babes, that he would / should touch them: but when his / the disciples saw it / it, they rebuked them.

16 But Jē'sus called them unto him, and said, / unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

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and sinful." He felt that with him evil so far overbalanced the good that he could make no plea for himself; and yet he, too, longed for salvation; so he threw himself wholly upon God's mercy and love in his sad prayer, "God be merciful to me *the* sinner!" for so the words should be rendered (*P. C.*).

14. This man went down to his house justified.—These are comforting words, and Jesus doubtless over and over had seen the truth of them. He who goes to ask for mercy, purely and simply, can confidently hope for mercy. He who expects to get to heaven because he is good, expects to get there without being saved; for no man can be saved who has not been lost (*S. S. T.*). **Every one that exalteth himself.**—"No sin, perhaps, is more offensive to God, or more common, than self-exaltation or pride; 'by that sin angels fell.' No virtue is more beautiful, and among men, few rarer, than humility." Since it must be, how much happier it is to do our own humbling, and let others do our exalting!

III. AS A LITTLE CHILD.

15. They brought unto him also their babes.—There was something about Jesus that drew children; and parents, who knew his gracious power, desired them to feel his presence and his touch. It was surely a natural desire; the memory of the event would rest as a benediction. **When the disciples saw it, they rebuked.**—They thought it not worth while that Jesus should be burdened in this way. Just as people now are disturbed if too much attention is paid to the life and growth of children!

16. Suffer little children to come unto me.—If one thinks of the time when they were spoken, these are especially beautiful words. The world had cared so little for childhood. **For of such is the kingdom.**—Who are the "such" to which it belongs? It must be taken figuratively, and must refer to those qualities in childhood, its dependence, its trustfulness, its tender affection, its loving obedience, which are typical of the essential Christian graces. It is not the excellence of any individual child, it is the traits belonging to childhood, as such, that are here taken as types of Christian excellence (*Kendrick*). If they who are *like* little children belong to the kingdom of heaven, why should we for a moment doubt that the little children themselves belong to the kingdom? Essentially they all do. And if the change which men call *death* happens to them while they are still little children, we may rest assured that it will be to the little ones life everlasting (*Dr. Morrison*).

17. Whomsoever shall not receive . . . as a little child.—The question is not whether a little child can be saved, but whether anybody else can be. The proper time for salvation is childhood. If one has passed that period unsaved, his only hope is in getting back again, as far as he can—back in spirit, and modes of thought and feeling and action—to the days of his child-life. The child, and not the grown man, is the pattern of the Christian believer (*Trumbull*).

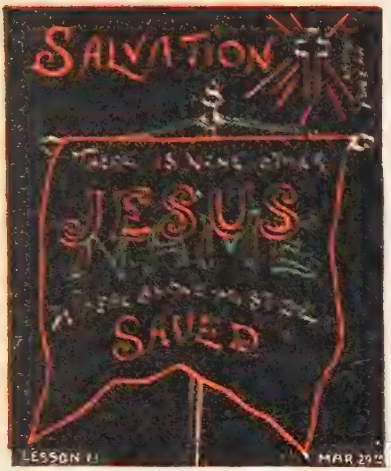
"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME."

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Humility Exalted. 9-14. To whom did Christ speak this parable? What two men went up into the temple? For what purpose? What was the general character of the classes to which these two men belonged? What was the Pharisees prayer? Did he probably tell the truth? Had he more than simply kept the law in these things? What was the publican's manner? What was his prayer? Which was more approved of God? Why? **2. Childhood Honored.** 15-17. Who were brought to Jesus? How did the disciples regard this? What did Jesus say? Who did he say should not enter the kingdom of God?

COLLECT.

O God, our Father, we can not approach to thee unhelped; assist us, meet us in our feeble prayers. In the presence of thy goodness and thy glory, teach us to speak our solemn wants, and give thee simple praises. Forgive us, and restore us wholly to thyself. Make us more meet to do our work on earth; more meet to join thy saints in heaven. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

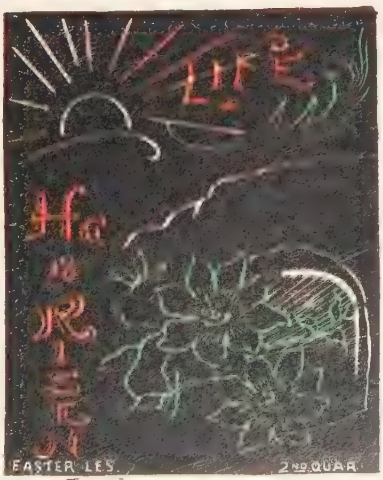

SALVATION
JESUS
SAVED
LESSON 11
MAR 29th

LIGHT OF LIFE
HEAVEN
LES. 3 2 QUAR
APR. 5. 96

WELCOME
COME FEAST
WITH JESUS
LES. 2. 2ND QUAR
APR. 12. 96

Restoration
HE IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD
LES. 3. 2ND QUAR.
APR. 19. 96

LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN
LES. 4. 2ND QUAR.
APR. 26. 96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Hints for Blackboard Talks.

LESSON I.—SECOND QUARTER.

No sin can enter heaven. It would not be heaven if sin entered. It would not be all peace and beauty. Think of hatred entering heaven. God has given us a way to be free from sin. He has told us that we must let go sin. He has told us how we can be free from sin. He has told us that we must be free from sin or we can not enter heaven. That we might have this freedom from sin, Christ died on the cross. This is not profit to us unless we go to the foot of the cross, and leave there every vestige of sin. Christ is more ready to forgive us than we are to go to him. It is we who are at fault.

LESSON III.—SECOND QUARTER.

To many people God is far away. Great, yes. Good, yes; but so far away. Christ came. He brought the thought of God so very near. He compared himself to the good Shepherd. The shepherd who loves his sheep. Who hungers and thirsts that the lost one may be brought back to the fold. Who seeks the lone ways and cold bleak places to find the one who has wandered away. He takes it into his bosom, and bears it to the safe fold of his everlasting love. Is it crippled, he bears it. Is it cold, he warms it. Is it lost, he seeks it. God is very near in the thought of the Shepherd. And God wants us to feel just that way.

EASTER LESSON (SUPPLEMENTARY).

A risen Lord. God's greatest gift to men. Doubt had settled dark and drear on the hearts of those who followed him, as the tomb closed over his crucified body. Prophecy had failed. Hope had failed. The tender voice and healing touch had gone forever, and even the beauty of his words was lost in the doubt as to their truth. But the riven tomb and the risen Lord lit again the hope that had sunk in the darkness of the tomb. He is not there; he has risen. That first glad cry has come down the ages to meet new hearts, and satisfy new longing. The truth was not only for the few who called him Lord and wept to see him die; it was for thousands of millions who were yet to come. It was for us on Easter morn. Every morn is an Easter morn for the soul glad in the possession of a Saviour.

LESSON XIII.—FIRST QUARTER.

Jesus Christ is the Saviour of men. He was sent of God to be the Saviour of men. All his teachings lead us to the thought that he is the sin-bearer. The one who can give us that peace that passes all understanding. Many have been lost, because they have sought for some other way to be saved. Those who have sought Christ have testified to the truth of the Word. Not only is Christ the Saviour, but he is the only Saviour. There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. The lessons of love and beauty all lead us to the foot of the cross. There, and there alone, can we find rest.

LESSON II.—SECOND QUARTER.

God created man. He did not tell him all that he had done for him. He did not tell him that he had hidden in the brown earth that which would feed him. That the birds of the air and the flocks of the field should all yield their treasures for his comfort and well being. He gave him these gifts. He gave him hunger and thirst, and longings for the beautiful, and let him find thereby presence in the great gift. He did not plant longings that could not be satisfied. He put into the soul a longing for spiritual food, and he sent the food to satisfy that longing. That food is Jesus Christ.

LESSON IV.—SECOND QUARTER.

The richest man here may be the poorest man in heaven. The coin is not the same. We shall not sit down beside the still waters and count the coins of gold, or tell over the acres or houses that we have been able to call our own. The treasure of heaven will not be of this kind. A loving deed in his name will weigh more than a gold coin. Service to him will be transformed by the magic of heaven to treasure that will gleam and glisten as jewels of rare worth and beauty. There will be some very rich people in heaven. They are not well known here, but God knows them, and he is keeping count of their treasures.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. KINDS OF PRAYER.—1. *True Prayer.*—True prayer is the appeal of a soul, conscious at once of its utter frailty, and yet of its measureless possibilities, to a Father infinite, both in his majesty, and his tenderness. The true petitioner never thinks of mounting to heaven on the imperfections of others.

> No righteousness, no merit, no worth, I bring to thee.
> One grace alone I covet,—*be merciful to me.*

2. *Ceremonial Goodness.*—Moral goodness is goodness always and everywhere; but ceremonies are only good at certain times and under certain circumstances. Fasting, if it make a man peevish, is no duty. Observe why Pharisaical men find it easier to be content with ceremonial observances than with moral goodness. They are definite acts, they can be counted. Twice a week the ceremony is done. "Go over my fields; not a tenth sheaf or shock is left standing. Search my stalls; not a tenth colt or calf is kept back." But moral goodness is more a state of heart than distinct acts. Take the law of love; you can not at night count up, and say, "It is all done," for love has no number of acts (*F. W. Robertson*).

3. "*A Fine Prayer.*"—Two children were observed on their knees behind a bush, one praying with much fervor. As they arose this one remarked, "Well, did n't I make a fine prayer?" "How often," said one who listened, "when God has disposed us to pray with some fervor in the presence of brethren, do we rise with a secret feeling of vanity, and if pride did not restrain us would say with this child, "Have I not made a fine prayer" (*Bib. Ill.*)? The Pharisee's prayer is like the pillar of brass which Trajan erected to himself in Rome, and which he covered with the record of his own triumphs. His prayer is a sort of monument over his own dead heart, upon which he inscribes his fancied virtues (*J. Wells*).

4. "*As This Publican.*"—There are some occupations, some ways of making a living, so beset with temptations, in which a man is so dependent for success on his own sharp dealings, in which he is so driven to take advantage of the follies and vices of others, that we may well thank God that we have been delivered from them. It is indeed sad to see Christians entangled in these perilous and hurtful pursuits, obliged to defend themselves from the accusations of conscience by building up unchristian principles of morality (*R. Winterbotham*).

II. WHOM CHRIST RECEIVES.—1. *God Can Recognize Man Only as a Subject.*—The proud makes himself his rival. "Humility is the deep ground into which all the streams of heavenly blessings are poured" (*Lange*). You can fill an empty jug with clear water from the spring; but it would be foolishness to bring to the spring a jug already full. The Lord has no blessing for the heart that is full of haughtiness; *that* he reserves for the heart that is emptied of self (*S. S. Times*).

> "Oh! to be nothing, nothing! only to lie at his feet
> A broken and emptied vessel, for the Master's use made meet."

But do not forget the next,—

> "Emptied, that he might *fill* me, *as forth to his service I go;*
> Broken, that so unhindered his life through me might flow."

2. *God Can Save Man Only as a Sinner.*—In the old tombs of our cathedrals there were frequently two figures on the monuments, one of the deceased king or knight robed as in life, another of a thin, emaciated skeleton which recalled the realities of the grave below. It is well we should have in thought this double image of ourselves—what we are before the world, if we like; but, in any case, what we are before our God (*Canon Liddon*). When the Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria, was expressing a concern for his soul, his physician mentioned his honorable conduct in his distinguished situation, but he stopped him, saying, "No; remember that if I am going to be saved, it is not as a prince, but as a sinner" (*Bib. Ill.*). The world has no relief for sin. The poet sang,—

"A sin lies dead and dreadful in my soul;
Why should I gaze upon it day by day?
O rather since it can not be destroyed,
Let me as reverently cover it
As with a cloak we cover up the dead,
And place it in some chamber of my soul
Where it may lie unseen as sound, yet *felt*,
Making life hushed and awful."

And here is the need of a Saviour,—

The heart which Christ has entered hath no room
For death and sin. Into the sea's dark depths
They shall be cast to rise no more for aye.

3. *God Can Receive Man Only as a Little Child.*—(1) Children are trustful; its trust has little to do with the intellect. Faith is not a thing of the understanding, but of the heart. When you read the Bible, do it as a child: "My Father says this." A child's joy is truer than a child's sorrow. A child's mind has a wonderful power of realization; they soon picture what is said to them. We should realize the invisible. A child's anger never lasts. They are innocent. They are as a rule generous. The sympathy of a child is perfect; to a tear or a smile he will respond in a moment. A little child is a thing new born; we must be born again (*J. Vaughn*). (2) We should be careful that we do not in any way stand between others and Christ. We make this mistake too often with reference to children. Jesus wants them. Is it not a grander thing to win for Christ a purer life and a longer service by leading a child to him, than to wait until soul and body are crippled by sin? (3) The mother's responsibility is a fearful one. The wise mother, and alas, unwise one too, can so mold her child's character that no power on earth can change its bent, so that it may be easy or difficult for even divine power to move.

A mother may sleep, but her life will move on
Till the last of the brood round her hearthstone is gone.

4. *A Final Thought on Prayer.*—"I object to stated times of prayer, because I am not always in the mood for praying," once said a prominent teacher. We can not always pray alike fervently, but we should always be able to speak to God reverently and sincerely. If we can not, we have not found him as we ought. The *humble* and the *sincere* prayer is always acceptable.

Two men went to pray: or rather say,
One went to brag, the other to pray.
One stands up close, and treads on high,
Where t' other dares not send his eye.
One nearer to the altar trod,
The other to the altar's God (*Crashaw*).

I THANK THEE; I AM NOT UNJUST; FAST OFTEN; GIVE TITHES.

O GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME, THE SINNER

GOLDEN TEXT.
He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.
—Luke xvi. 10.

LESSON VII. MAY 17.

PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.

Luke xix. 11-27.

Time.—March, A. D. 30. **Place.**—The house of Zacchæus, Jericho.

Geographical Notes.—In the first verse of this lesson it is said that Jesus was "nigh unto Jerusalem" when he spoke it. The preceding paragraph shows that he had just left Jericho, where he had visited the house of Zacchæus. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem led first due south for about one and a half miles, with an almost perpendicular mountain wall rising abruptly on the right. After passing the mouth of the deep gorge from which flows the stream called Waddie Kelt, supposed to be the brook Cherith of the Old Testament, the road turns abruptly to the right, and begins to ascend the mountains by a gap between high knobs. The ascent is at first quite steep, too much so for loaded vehicles, and for sixteen miles the traveler rides over the roughest highway in Palestine, ere he stands on the summit of the mount of Olives, and looks down on the Holy City. This was the laborious walk on which Jesus had entered when he spoke the Parable of the Pounds.

A day of opportunity is life.
Go not as burdened to thy daily task;
God gives it thee; be patient, and rejoice.

Those who look upon all their possessions as, strictly speaking, the possessions of God, and who cherish a perpetual readiness to yield everything to his command, sustain no losses. They do not perhaps get broken into the habit of parting company with loved and familiar things without a pang; but with the pang there is the consolation of knowing that a God of boundless goodness is guiding all things, and is leading on to their best development and eternal joy (*Bowen*).

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, May 11.—The Finding of Zaccheus (Luke xix. 1-10).
Tuesday, May 12.—Parable of the Pounds (Luke xix. 11-27).
Wednesday, May 13.—The Triumphal Entry (Luke xix. 28-40).
Thursday, May 14.—Weeping Over Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41-48).
Friday, May 15.—Each of Us Shall Give Account (Rom. xiv. 1-12).
Saturday, May 16.—Parable of the Talents (Matt. xxv. 14-30).
Sunday, May 17.—How the Talents Were Used (Matt. xxv. 13-45).

AND as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Je-ru'sa-lĕm, and because they thought because they supposed that the kingdom of God should was immediately to appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants' of his, and delivered gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy Trade ye *herewith* till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message an ambassage after him, saying, We will not have that this *man* to man reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, come back again, having received the kingdom, then that he commanded these servants,

I. TESTING HIS SERVANTS.

EXPLANATORY.

11. He added and spake a parable.—Jesus has just been sharing the hospitality of Zacchæus. He has declared his mission to seek and save the lost. Now he turns a page and emphasizes human responsibility. **Because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.**—He was going on to Jerusalem, only seventeen miles away; and many, impressed with his high claims and his marvelous power, and moreover, made sure by his words that a great crisis was at hand, were thinking he would now take his throne, and bring the promised deliverance to his people. To give them right views of his kingdom he spake this parable.

12. A certain nobleman went into a far country.—The illustration would be familiar. Some thirty years before, Archelaus, on the death of his father, Herod the Great, had gone from this very city to Rome to seek and receive from Cæsar his overlord, the kingdom of which they were a part. The thought of the parable must have been too strange for them to grasp. Jesus was not going to be crowned king at Jerusalem; he must go away, away from earth, before his kingdom could be given him. In the light of this parable how glorious is the Pentecostal morn! He *was* crowned in that "far country" so blessed, whither he went. "Being at the right hand of God exalted, he hath shed forth this," said Peter (Acts ii.). **And to return.**—Since the day that it has been publicly proclaimed that he has received his kingdom, Jesus has been the rightful Ruler of this earth. Men may resist his claim; but he will come again, and then he will judge and rule absolutely.

13. He called ten servants of his.—Before he departed he committed special responsibilities to certain servants. Two classes of persons are introduced into the story. The first consists of servants or bond-servants of the nobleman; the second of those who are citizens of his province. The servants may represent those who would be disciples, and would thus be given the obligations pertaining to service and discipleship. The citizens represent particularly the hostile Jews (*Dr. Dwight*). **And gave them ten pounds.**—A pound apiece, about $17 in our money. The amount is not a point of importance. Every Christian has a light to bear, a truth to teach, a song to sing, a burden to share. It is a serious and yet a blessed thing. Opportunity means responsibility; and responsibility, opportunity. **Trade ye herewith till I come.**—The revised version brings back the old meaning of *occupy*—to trade or traffic. The lord's command was clear; the gift was to be *used*.

14. But his citizens hated him.—Here again was a historic parable. Archelaus had been hated of the Jews, and a delegation of fifty leading men had been sent to Rome, where they were joined by eight thousand resident Jews in protesting against his appointment as king. The petition was vain, and provoked Archelaus to such persecution and slaughter that in ten years he was deposed and banished to Gaul, where he died. As men hated a bad king, even so might they one that was good. **We will not that this man reign over us.**—Jesus was, and is, the friend and the especial champion of the poor and the oppressed; his religion asserts the supreme rights of the common people. For this very reason he has been hated by those who by artificial bonds have held place and power over men. And yet too often these oppressors have led these subjects to mad rejection of their best friend.

II. FAITHFULNESS REWARDED.

15. When he was come back again.—The application would be to the second coming of Christ. But, practically, he is ever coming,—in the crises of life, and at death. He calls to account; it would be a wrong all around not to do that.

16-19. Then came the first.—Three servants are given as samples of the ten. It is perhaps easier to think that one-third of the master's servants rendered nothing for their pound, than that one-third returned ten for one. The great mass render five, or less than that. But they deal with a gracious master. The first

unto whom he had given the money, to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man what they had gained by trading.

16 Then came And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained made ten pounds more.

17 And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou hast been wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound Thy pound, Lord, hath gained made five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to unto him also, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he He saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was am an austere

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had been faithful in the highest degree, and had kept his pound—his powers—incessantly and discreetly employed; he returned tenfold. **Well done, thou good servant.**—Everything follows from such an approval; it is the highest possible reward. **Because thou wast found faithful in a very little.**—Here is the point—not have you done great things with great bestowments, but have you used faithfully whatever was given you? It matters little to me what place or ability I have, but it matters everything how I use what I have. **Have thou authority over ten cities.**—It was customary for kings of the east to bestow provinces and cities upon their favorites; it meant to them a great degree of independent revenue, and power. And Christ uses the fact for a figure. Fidelity to a little trust led to a far greater and more blessed one. Of course the servant found faithful would be faithful still, and be at last what he proved himself at first. **The second came . . . Thy pound, Lord, hath made five.**—We miss here the hearty words of approval bestowed upon the first; and yet the master approves him, and gives a proportionate reward. If you bestow here the same rich gift upon two friends, it is not alike to them, for one *will know how to enjoy it* more than the other.

III. UNFAITHFULNESS PUNISHED.

20, 21. Another came saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound.—Here is a very different character. He has not squandered the talent—in a certain way he has been very careful of it; he has taken pains not to do bad things; he probably has been a very prim and proper man. The trouble is that he has not put his Lord's gift to any use. He is one of those negative moralists who never learn that to let a man drown when you might save him, is to be guilty of murder; that not to employ gifts is to waste them, and not to use them is to lose them. **For I feared thee.**—Here he makes excuse, and slanders his Lord. He was afraid if he tried to use the pound he might make an unlucky venture and lose it; and the master was so very harsh and exacting! **Out of their own mouth will I judge thee.**—The Lord does not indorse the man's harsh words, but he uses them. If you knew I was stern, why did you not seek to do what I might reasonably require? **Wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank?**—If you were afraid to risk an investment of your own, you might

man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow;

23 Wherefore then (Then wherefore) gavest (not thou / thou not) my money into the bank, (that / and I) at my coming (I might / should) have required (it / mine own) with (usury? / interest?)

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take (away) from him the pound, and give (it to / it unto) him that hath (the) ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)
And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.

26 (For I / I) say unto you, That unto every one (which / that) hath shall be given; (and / but) from him that hath not, even that (which) he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But those (Howbeit these) mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay (them / them) before me.

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at least have done this. You could have secured for me a proper interest. "Many in 'the bank' have seen mirrored those Christian societies and missionary organizations to which every believer may entrust the resources which he is uncertain how best to use for himself. Without particularizing, however, we may understand the Lord to teach, that no man in this world is doomed to inactivity or uselessness, but that there will be opportunity offered to every one who is willing to use his talent in an obscure and humble, if not a conspicuous and heroic way" (*P. C.*). "Silly Joe" who begged to ring the bell on prayer-meeting nights, "because he loved to hear it so;" and who laid it on himself to keep the Widow Jones' wood box filled the last two winters she lived on earth, put his Lord's talent out at very large interest.

24-26. Take away from him the pound.—This judgment and the bestowal of the pound on one who had shown ability to use it best, seems to have startled the bystanders; but it is the outworking of a universal law. Nature says to man, nay, to everything that has life,—every gift that you do not use, shall perish. The eye that is kept in darkness, goes out; the arm that is kept bandaged, withers; the heart that does not love, and the spirit that does not aspire, shall die. **Unto everyone that hath shall be given.**—Everyone who really has life, has growth. Every advance insures another advance, and in every true gain is a gain of power. **But from him that hath not.**—There is a sense in which one may have and yet not have; when a gift becomes a kind of dead appendage to a man, a power which he never will, or never again can use. The pound was of no use to this servant, nor while he held it was it of use to any one else. It were better taken away.

27. These mine enemies.—Now the Lord turns from his servants to his rebellious subjects. The destruction of sinners is a fearful thing, but the endless life and power of sinners is a more fearful thing. The tragedy of sin must stop some time. "Here is an obvious reference to the Lord's dealings with his chosen people, and an unmistakable reference to the awful ruin and disaster which was so soon to overwhelm the city and temple and the whole nationality. But behind this temporal judgment there looms up in the background the vast shadow of a terrible doom reserved for the enemies of the Redeemer" (*P. C.*).

COLLECT.

Our Father in heaven, help us to use well the talents thou hast given us. It may be we can not speak great words, but help us to know that we can speak kind words and true words. It may be we can not do great deeds, but help us to know that we may do helpful and loving deeds, all the days of our life. May we love to live because we love to do good, and to praise thee forever. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE TRUST.—1. The disciples were still under the old delusions, eager for the glories of a temporal kingdom soon to be set up. Christ seeks to teach them that their future duty is working and waiting, that they must be tested before they are given the greatest honors.

2. *Tested in Little.*—The nobleman was not money-making, but character-making. The school-boy does not need costly books. The young apprentice has his hand and eye trained by working on cheap materials. Do not wait for some great opportunity. The artist makes his first picture with a bit of chalk or burnt stick (*Bib. Ill.*).

He liveth long who liveth well;
All else is being flung away,
He liveth longest who can tell
Of true things truly done each day (*Bonar*).

3. *What We Can.*—It was a good saying of Epictetus, "If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale; if a lark, as a lark; but now I am a man, I will glorify God as a man." All who call Christ "Lord and Master," will find some work to do for him, and even some distinctively spiritual work. We have all some goods of Christ entrusted to us, and some capacity for using them. However inadequately this world's goods may be divided, in the spiritual realm every man may take and do as much as he can. What is to hinder us from being as self-denying, as lowly in spirit, as we care to be? Our ability is the only measure and limit of our duty as well as of our right (*Cox*).

4. *Latent Possibilities.*—We never really know what our powers are till we begin to use them. The noblest are often the most slowly developed. That which is out of sight is more and greater than that which pushes out into our view. That point of rock which rises out of the hillside is, to the geologist, not merely a distinct stone—it tells him the dip and quality of the great strata underground which buttress the hills. Godliness has promise not only of the life which now is, but of that which is to come; the promise which one part of a thing gives of another part (*Vincent*).

II. THE REWARD OF FIDELITY.—1. It will be a reward in itself to see the purpose, and the good which has grown out of the tasks set for us, which have been hidden from us here. A humble stone-cutter is given a block of stone to work on. It is one of the many parts which are to form some ornament. Here is just a querl or fern, and there a branch of what is probably to be a flower. He goes to work putting all his taste and skill into it. Then the master takes it away and gives him another. Afterward, walking along the street, he looks up at the art gallery and sees the stones upon which he has worked combined in a structure which is the beauty of the whole street. Dear friends, when you see your work in that great structure which God is building, you will rejoice in every single moment of fidelity with which you wrought (*Beecher*).

2. *The Greater Reward.*—The reward of faithful service will be enlarged opportunity and scope for service. The Christian's reward is above suspicion, it is the power to do more work (*Cox*). The great souls are not those of great talents, but of great faithfulness. It is use which increases our power to do, to say, to feel. If to one is given a greater joy in reward than to another, it is because he can feel the greater joy. One may bestow the same gift upon two friends, and to one it may be far more than to the other. "In heaven every man's cup of happiness will be full, but some can hold more than others." It is not then the *deeds* we have done which we offer for reward, but *souls enlarged* by toil and suffering in the doing, which we bring for the blessing which grace bestows.

The hour draws near, howe'er delayed and late,
When at the Eternal Gate
We leave the words and works we call our own
And lift void hands alone

For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that gate no toll:
Giftless we come to him who all things gives
And live because he lives (*Whittier*).

SUMMIT OF MOUNT OF OLIVES.

III. THE FATE OF UNFAITHFULNESS.—1. *Cowardly Selfishness.*—Some are so afraid that they will do wrong that they do nothing. Better the impulsive, sympathetic helpfulness which sometimes makes mistakes, than the selfish propriety which in attending to its own business fails to remember that it should be about the Father's business.

2. *Criminal Laziness.*—In our age—in no land so much as ours—not doing is criminal. The means of education, the sources of knowledge, the duties of citizenship, in this land, are such that to be born here is—I had almost said to take the oath—to fulfill these things. In secular relations the necessities of business and the sweep of public sentiment are tending constantly to bring out all there is in men. In the higher spiritual life it is not always the case. Men are content with the moral sense they have if it averages the moral sense of the community, about the amount of faith that comes to them without seeking. But the law of the gospel is, Develop (*Beecher*).

3. *Self-Condemned.*—Man works out his own condemnation in the fact that power unseen is lost, as one loses the strength of a limb by lack of exercise. Mr. Darwin says: "I can not endure to read a line of poetry. I have almost lost my taste for pictures or music. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding out general laws out of large collections of facts; but why this should have caused *the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend* I can not conceive." If the servant feels that his master is stern and exacting that is the stronger reason why he should be preparing to render a satisfactory account.

4. *To Him That Hath.*—Having—real having—is eager, instant, active, possession, the sinewy grip. Having is using. In this sense of having the more we have the more we get, the less we have the less we get. This is law, universal law. Character is not accident, nor happy inheritance, but the hardest battle and victory. Evil never abdicates, never goes off on a vacation, never sleeps. If prayer be what Tertullian pictures it, the watchery of a soldier under arms, guarding the tent and standard of his general, then the habit of it ought to be growing on us. For the night is round about us, and, though the stars are out, our enemies are not asleep (*Hitchcock*).

1 x 1 = 1 HE KEEPS WHO USES
1 x 0 = 0 WHO USES NOT LOSES

LESSON VIII. MAY 24.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.
—Luke xx. 17.

JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE.

Luke xx. 9-19.

Time.—Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30. **Place.**—Temple at Jerusalem.

Introductory.—The life of Jesus hastens to its crisis. He goes boldly, and grows stern as he goes, into a final conflict with Pharisees and Sadducees; nay, with the Pharisaism and Sadduceeism of all the world. He has made a most unpretentious, and yet significant, triumphal entry into Jerusalem; has once more cleansed the temple which was persistently defiled by its keepers; and now we come to the last great day of his public teaching. (See lesson for April 14, 1895.)

STREET IN JERUSALEM.

9 Then began he / And he began to speak to / unto the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth / out to husbandmen, and went into a far / another country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, / unto the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him / him away empty.

I. OBLIGATION REJECTED

EXPLANATORY.

9. A man planted a vineyard.—Jesus here turns from the scribes and elders, whose insincerity he had just shown, and whose hostility was relentless, to the common people. He represents a man of means as securing a proper piece of land, and fencing it, planting it to vines, fitting it up for use and production, and then leaving it in the hands of men who accept proper terms, while he goes to another country, far off, to be long gone. The *man* represents God, who made and owns and bestows all things. The *vineyard* represents the kingdom of God; or more particularly here, the doctrines, ordinances, and institutions embodied in the law, and committed to Israel. The people of Israel themselves were called his vineyard (Isa. v. 1-7; iii. 14). This vineyard may be taken as indicating the chosen people; the husbandmen, the men who exercised government among them (*Edgar*). The *husbandmen* represent the rulers of the Jews; yet the people as a whole, a nation or a church, are involved and included (*Schaff*).

10. At the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant.—He expected a share of the fruitage. The good husbandman will take good care of his estate, he will be industrious and tidy; and he will also make a just return for what he uses, and honestly apply and distribute his products. The owner of

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, May 18.—By What Authority (Luke xx. 1-8).
Tuesday, May 19.—Parable of the Vineyard (Luke xx. 9-19).
Wednesday, May 20.—Tribute to Cæsar (Luke xx. 20-26).
Thursday, May 21.—Neither Marry, Nor are Given (Luke xx. 27-36).
Friday, May 22.—David's Son (Luke xx. 37-47).
Saturday, May 23.—The Lord's Vineyard (Isa. v. 1-7).
Sunday, May 24.—The Lesson in Matthew (Matt. xxi. 33-46).

11 And again he sent yet another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

12 And again he sent yet a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. him forth.

13 Then said And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. him.

WATCH TOWER IN VINEYARD.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among one with themselves, another, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

the vineyard expected this. **But the husbandmen beat him.**—They proposed to take possession of the vineyard, and use it for themselves alone. And further, they were heartless,—thieves and defrauders always are at the bottom; they cruelly beat the man who came in simple fidelity to his master's will. . . . . In fact, the people of whom Jesus spoke had despoiled and perverted their vineyard. This was his constant later burden,—"You have misapplied the gifts of God to you; instead of growing unselfish and compassionate, you are bigots; instead of growing pure and devout, you are hypocrites; instead of now looking for a generous and spiritual kingdom, your hearts are set on one that will gratify your malicious spite and your meaner pride. You bring no fruit from God's vineyard."

11. He sent yet another servant.—These servants stand for the prophets and teachers who were successively sent unto the Jews. The people that were intended to be the examples and educators of the world, failed of their function and shrank within themselves. The fate of the men who were sent to rouse them and secure a just fruitage grew more and more sad. Professor Bruce says: "When the servants came for fruit the keepers were simply surprised. 'Fruit! did you say? We have occupied the position of vine-dressers, and have only drawn our wages; what more do you want?' Such was the actual fact in regard to the spiritual heads of Israel. They were men who never thought of fruit, but only of the honor and privilege of being entrusted with the keeping of the vineyard. They were triflers, men utterly devoid of earnestness, and the practical purpose of the property committed to their charge they habitually forgot. Generally speaking, they had utterly lost sight of the end of Israel's calling." Christ honored the temple, and denounced the men who profaned it; he honored the law, and bitterly condemned the leaders who perverted and made it fruitless. **He sent out a third.**—God had borne with his people for a thousand years. He had sent prophets in three great periods,—that of Samuel, of Elijah and Elisha, and that of Isaiah and Jeremiah, to call his people to righteousness and spiritual fruitfulness.

II. MERCY REFUSED.

13. What shall I do? I will send my beloved son.—"The presence of my son will make men realize my just claims, and their obligations." Here we reach the climax of God's goodness, and man's wickedness. Here is Jesus' answer in parable to the question the council had just asked: "By what authority doest thou these things?" The leaders understood precisely what Jesus meant in this teaching, and in the light of it they proceeded deliberately to kill him!

"God loveth all, his Nearest best;
Yet gave him up to save the rest!"

15 So / And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed *him.* / him. What therefore shall / will the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall / will come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall / will give the vineyard to / unto others. And when they heard *it,* / it, they said, God forbid.

17 And / But he beheld / looked upon them, and said, What then / is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the / The same is become / was made the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon / Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken / to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind / scatter him to powder. / as dust.

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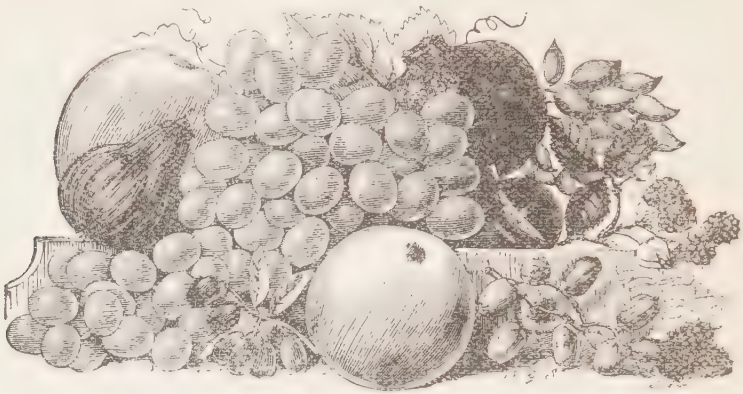
14. But when the husbandmen saw him.—A man may love the world more than he loves God; he may love a perverted religion more than he loves the will of God. Did these zealous Jews understand that they were killing the Son, the "Supreme One," sent of God? They had reason to know it. But they were mad against such changes as he would bring about. They hated God—*as Jesus revealed him,* and proposed to keep their selfish hopes, and ambitions, and powers, and prerogatives at whatever cost. **That the inheritance be ours.**—If Jesus and his teaching triumphed—

> The holy walls, that did inclose so much
> Unholiness, would all break down;

the empty forms on which their hearts were set, would vanish; and the false sanctities "on which they rose to proud pre-eminence," would all be laughed at. The thought was intolerable. If Jesus were destroyed, the Pharisee might live on in his little kingdom; the "inheritance" would be his own.

15, 16. They cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him.—They utterly refused and rejected him. As far as lay in their power they destroyed him, and heaped contempt and shame upon his name. As a story, the parable was in itself improbable; but the truth it figured was vivid enough. **What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do?**—There is only one thing to do. There is no longer any hope of bringing these defrauders and murderers to righteousness. The highest motive has been used, the most powerful plea made. The only thing that remains is destruction. **And he will give the vineyard unto others.**—A passage that points to the Christian Church, where Gentiles would enter into privileges and services, which the chosen had refused and forfeited. How quickly the Jewish ear caught this! **When they heard it they said, God forbid.**—The thought that their peculiar rights and privileges should be given to others was unendurable. The prophecy of their own destruction they might hear in sullen silence; but the promise of salvation to the Gentiles called forth immediate protest.

17–19. What then is this that is written.—See Ps. cxviii. 22, 23. Jesus shows from a familiar Scripture that a great rejection would prove to be mistaken, and that the stone cast aside would prove at last the chief stone of the foundation, the one from which every measure was taken and the whole proportion and tone of the building decided. "The stone is the whole kingdom and power of the Messiah summed up in himself" (*Alford*). **Everyone that falleth upon that stone.**—Whoever stumbles at Jesus in his lowly and rejected state, in the day of his humiliation, shall suffer hurt; but those who reject and oppose him after his glorification—these shall be crushed. When the gospel was fully preached, as it was on Pentecost and ever after, he who rejected had no hope. Men who rejected before might be pricked to the heart, and forgiven. **The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him.**—The truth that should have sobered and cured these leaders, only goaded them to madness. Fear of the people, whose hearts had no reason to partake of their hate,



FRUITS OF PALESTINE.

19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; in that very hour; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken spake this parable against them.

restrained them for a season; but in two short days they had their revenge. So they fulfilled their part of the parable; and forty years later came to them the final fulfillment; when, in horrors that can not be realized, the city of Jerusalem perished, and as a nation, Israel ceased to be. And from first to last, it was the malignant selfishness, and the moral madness of the people which brought every loss and every horror on their heads.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Seeking for Fruit. 9-12. To whom did Christ begin to speak? What did a certain man plant? What disposal did he make of his property? For what did he send a servant? What did the husbandmen do? How did they treat the second? The third? **2. The Last Trial.** 13-15. What did the lord of the vineyard decide to do? What did the husbandmen reason when they saw the son? How did they treat him? Was such patience opposed to such baseness humanly probable? Has even God's patience a limit? **3. Destruction.** 16-19. What will the master do? What did those who heard the parable say? What quotation did Christ make from the Psalms? What did he say would be the fate of him who fell upon the rejected stone? Of him upon whom it should fall?

COLLECT.

O patient Father, bear with us still, we pray thee. Deliver us from the bondage of our own low and selfish desires, and make us free to give to thee all the love and service that is thine own. May our hearts not work against thee, or apart from thee; but may we be one with thee, and share in thy purpose, thy work, and thy joy, through all the ages. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. WICKED TENANTS.—1. *The Messenger Despised.*—The calls and reproofs of the word, if they do not engage, will but exasperate. *So persecuted they the prophets,* who were hated with a cruel hatred. They not only despised and reproached them, but treated them as the worst of malefactors. They beat Jeremiah, killed Isaiah, stoned Zechariah, the son of Jehoida, in the temple. . . . And they were the husbandmen that treated them thus; the chief priest and elders that sat in Moses' chair, that cast them out and said, *Let the Lord be glorified* (*Henry*).

2. *The Growth of Evil.*—The putting of Christ to death filled up the measure of Jewish iniquity, and brought upon them ruin without remedy. No other could be expected than that God should *destroy those wicked husbandmen.* They began in not paying their rent, but then proceeded to beat and kill the servants and at length their young master himself. Those that live in the neglect of their duty to God, know not what degree of sin and destruction they are running themselves into (*Henry*).

3. *Ever Thus.*—How has the world treated its benefactors? They have endured every sort of persecution. They have been poisoned, burned, stoned, tortured, crucified. Says one: "The world's benefactors are first neglected, then derided, then stared at, then hated." Says another: "To incur the hatred of bad men is no proof that one is wrong. Who ever heard of slandering a bad man? Slander is the revenge of a coward!"

4. *True Victors.*—

While banners are waving, hands clapping, and hurrying feet—
Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors,—I stand on the field of defeat
In the shadow, 'mongst those who are fallen, and wounded and dying—and there
Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-knotted brows, breathe a prayer,
Hold the hand that is hapless, and whisper, "They only the victory win,
Who have fought the good fight, and have vanquished the demon that tempts us within;
Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, and, if need be, to die" (*W. W. Story*).

II. THE DOOM PRONOUNCED.—1. *Irredeemable Loss.*—Look at the fact, the mathematical certainty, that if you deduct from the experience of a man's holiness for a while, you have deducted something of absolute measureless value, "There will be no final pain or permanent loss in the universe?" I affirm that you can not take out of human history six thousand years, and give them over to blackest sins, or your least black, without subtracting from the bliss of the universe; and that this gap is a part of the record of the past, and that you can never fill it up. That gap will exist—

"Till the sun is old,
And the stars are cold,
And the leaves of the judgment book unfold" (*Joseph Cook*).

2. *The Rejected Stone.*—The illustration seems to have been drawn from one of the stones quarried, hewn, and marked away from the site of the temple which the builders, ignorant of the head architect's plans, or finding on it no mark (such as recent explorations have shown to have been placed on the stones of Solomon's Temple to indicate their intended position) had put on one side as having no place in the building, but which was found afterward to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended, on which as the chief corner-stone the two walls met and were bonded together (*Johnson*).

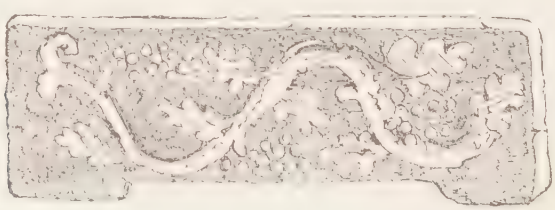
3. *Everyone That Falleth.*—The offense that men take at Christ will not hurt him any more than he that stumbles hurts the stone that he stumbles at; but it will hurt themselves; they will fall and be broken (*Henry*).

4. *On Whomsoever it Shall Fall.*—I remember, away up in a lonely highland valley, where beneath a tall black cliff, all weather-worn and cracked and seamed, there lies at the foot, resting on the greensward that creeps around its base, a huge rock that has fallen from the face of the precipice. A shepherd was passing beneath it, and suddenly,

when the finger of God's will touched it, and rent it from its bed in the everlasting rock, it fell, and the man who was beneath it is there now! "It will grind him to powder." I say to you, since all that stand against him shall be swept away, make him the foundation on which you build, you will be safe upon the Rock of Ages (*McLaren*).

III. WE ARE IN CHARGE OF THE VINEYARDS.—1. Our *body* is a vineyard. It ought to be the means of doing much good in the world. Rightly used, it is a splendid gift. But how many misuse, and even abuse, their bodies! They weaken them by excess, or paralyze them with drink; or they make them instruments of physical pleasure, and turn them to no high account—they yield no "reasonable service." 2. So of our *intellect*. Our minds are given to us to cultivate so that they shall be fruitful to the highest degree in the service of God and our fellow men. But how few understand this! They use their minds, it may be, for mere getting of gold, with which they again pamper their bodies; or else they ruin their minds with stories of literature that amount to nothing, and help in no way the development of this God-given faculty. If all the time and strength spent in novel reading were expended in useful reading, what a change would come over our young people! But to be in fashion you must have read whatever idiotic and harmful book is the rage, and have filled your thought with that which helps neither yourself nor any one else. A beautiful garden simply given over to weeds is an unsightly thing; but it is beauty itself compared to some minds that should be stored with the riches of helpful truth, but are simply the receptacles of all manner of intellectual rubbish. God asks fruit of those to whom he has given minds and intellectual opportunities, and in only too many cases it is refused. 3. So of *spiritual* endowments. There are lofty truths within our reach, and a grand development of moral conception, and of faith power, is possible. Yet how few yield fair fruitage! In any church of two hundred members you do well if you get forty workers. The others miss or misuse their opportunities, and make poor returns for what their Lord has bestowed. 4. So of our *possessions*. I am responsible to God for the right use of what I have, as well as for the right use of what I am. This is a hard truth for many to grasp. They think that their money is their own. Some men treat God in this respect, as some mean men treat their wives—doling out a sixpence now and then, as though they were dependent beggars! There are men in nearly all communities who are conscientious, and nobly free in their use of money. Thank God for them. The average Christian, as shown by facts and figures, is not so. Even the proportion of the Jew (one-tenth) is denied to the Lord by the average Christian, who reserves to himself the right to abuse the Jew for stinginess, and then to be meaner than he. It is sadly true that the heathen gives more proportionately for the worship of his idol than the Christian does for the worship of the living God. This age more and more is lavishing money on itself. But there will be a day of reckoning (*adapted from Dr. Schauffler, in S. S. T.*).

INJUSTICE SERVANTS REFUSED
INGRATITUDE SON REJECTED



GOLDEN TEXT.

Heav n and earth shall pass away; b t my words sha l not pass away.—Luke xxi 33.

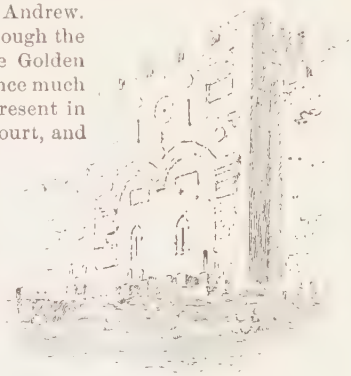
LESSON IX. MAY 31.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM FORETOLD.

Luke xxi. 20-36.

Time.—Tuesday evening, April 4, A. D. 30. **Place.**—Mount of Olives.

Geographical Notes.—We learn from Mark, that the speech, of which this lesson is a part, was delivered "on the Mount of Olives over against the temple" (xiii. 1-4). From his account we ascertain that when Jesus left the temple that day he was followed by only four of his disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew. As they were going eastward they doubtless went out through the eastern gate of the temple, probably the one called the Golden Gate, which has been for ages closed up, but which was once much larger and more ornamental than any of the gates at present in use. The massiveness of the outer walls of the temple court, and those of the various structures within, was more conspicuous from this point of view than from any other, and these pieces of masonry were so far superior to any seen elsewhere in the country, that men from the rural districts never ceased to admire them on their visits to the city. No wonder then, that the four Galileans exclaimed, "Master, behold what manner of stones, and what manner of buildings!" He walked on in silence down the steep slope which leads into the valley of the Kedron, and thence up the still steeper slope of the Mount of Olives. When he had reached the summit of the latter mountain, or perhaps a comparatively level terrace near the summit, he stopped and sat down to rest. Then the four disciples, who had been wondering over his statement that the time would come when not one stone would be left upon another in those great walls, came to him with the question which drew from him the most elaborate prophetical discourse which he ever delivered.



THE GOLDEN GATE.

20 And / But when ye shall see Je-ru'sa-lĕm compassed with armies, then know that the / her desolation thereof is nigh. / at hand.

I. AN AWFUL DESTRUCTION AT HAND.

EXPLANATORY.

As Jesus was passing from Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives at the close of his last and most eventful day of teaching, he looked back upon the temple in lingering sorrow, and foretold its utter destruction. To his disciples this seemed the culmination of all earthly judgments; they connected it at once with his full and final coming, and asked when these things should be. Jesus answers the practical part of their question. There is one question which even he, *in his human limitation*, can not answer (Mark xiii. 32). He first warns them against *apparent* signs of the coming judgment (verses 8, 9); and then, in the lesson of to-day, he gives three signs.

20, 21. When ye see Jerusalem encompassed.—Here is explicit teaching. The Jews felt to the last that their city and the sacred temple *could not* be destroyed. But Jesus says, "When a great and hostile army gathers about Jerusalem, know that destruction has come." **Then let them that are in**

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, May 25.—Destruction of the Temple Foretold (Luke xxi. 1-9).

Tuesday, May 26.—Persecution Foretold (Luke xxi. 10-19).

Wednesday, May 27.—Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold (Luke xxi. 20-28).

Thursday, May 28.—"Watch Ye at Every Season" (Luke xxi. 29-38).

Friday, May 29.—"We Look for New Heavens" (II. Pet. iii. 1-14).

Saturday, May 30.—Life and Death Set Before (Deut. xxv. 11-20).

Sunday, May 31.—The Lesson in Matthew (Matt. xxiv. 15-35).

21 Then let them which that are in Jū-dæ'a flee to unto the mountains; and let them which that are in the midst of it her depart out; and let not them that are in the countries country enter thereinto therein.

22 For these be the are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But woe Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in upon the land, and wrath upon unto this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all the nations: and Je-ru'sa-lĕm shall be trodden down of the Gĕn'tīles, until the times of the Gĕn'tīles be fulfilled.

Judæa flee.—The desolation would be so widespread that believers in all that region, as well as from the city, should flee far out to a place of refuge. It is wonderful how this teaching did preserve the Jewish Christians. Two years before the final investment of Jerusalem by Vespasian in A. D. 70, the Roman commander, Cestius Gallus, approached and invested the revolting city; and then, for some unexplained reason, drew off his troops. The Christians, heeding the words of Christ, fled beyond the Jordan to Pella. Josephus says, "Immediately after the departure of Cestius, many of the Jews daily fled from the city, as from a sinking ship." For fifty years Pella was the seat of the "Church of Jerusalem."

22, 23. For these are the days of vengeance.—The wickedness of the Jews literally drew all their woes immediately upon themselves. Their boundless conceit, and intolerant hatred, brought on them the oppression of the Romans; and the cruelties of the Romans drove them to madness. The days of confusion and wretchedness would be especially bitter for those who were weak, or for mothers burdened with little children. "Pray," says Jesus as reported by Matthew (xxiv. 20), "that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a Sabbath".

WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

24. They shall fall by the edge of the sword.—In April, A. D. 70, Titus, with a force of 80,000, pitched his camp to the north of the city. Besides the 2,400 trained Jewish soldiers who defended the walls, the city was thronged with an incredible number of Passover pilgrims, and of fugitives from other parts of Judæa. Feats of heroic valor were performed on both sides, and the skill of the besiegers was often checked by the almost insane fury of the besieged. Fanatically relying on the visible manifestation of Jehovah, while they were infamously violating all his laws, the Zealots rejected with insult every offer of terms. At last Titus drew a line of circumvallation round the doomed city, and began to crucify all the deserters who fled to him. The incidents of the famine which then fell on the besieged are among the most horrible in human literature. The corpses bred a pestilence. Whole houses were filled with unburied families of the dead. Mothers slew and devoured their own children. Hunger, rage, despair, and madness seized the city. It became a cage of furious madmen, a city of howling wild beasts, and of cannibals—a hell! For the first time for five centuries, on July 17, A. D. 70, the daily sacrifices of the temple ceased. At last, in August, amid shrieks and flames, and suicide and massacre, the temple was taken and reduced to ashes. According to Josephus, it had been the earnest desire of Titus to preserve the temple, but his commands were disobeyed by his soldiers in the fury of the struggle. The great altar of sacrifices was heaped with the slain. The courts of the temple swam deep with blood. Six thousand miserable women and children sank with a wild cry of terror amid the blazing ruins of the cloisters. It

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; for the roaring of the sea and the waves roaring; billows;

26 Men's hearts failing them Men fainting for fear, and for looking after those expectation of the things which are coming on the earth; world: for the powers of the heavens heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 And But when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for because your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see it and know of your own selves that the summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise Even so ye also, when ye see these things come coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

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may well be said that the nation seemed to have given itself a rendezvous of awful extermination (*Farrar*). Josephus reckons the number who perished in the siege at 1,100,000; the number spared and sold as captives at 97,000. So does history meet Christ's prophecy. **Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.**—Titus ordered the city to be razed so completely as to seem like a spot never inhabited. In A. D. 120 a city called Ælia Capitolina was built on the ruins by the Emperor Hadrian, and Christians were allowed free access to it; but no Jew was suffered to approach. And from that day to this "no Jew, save on bare suffrance, has dwelt in the old loved and sacred spot." **Until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.**—Until a new dispensation dawns; until the Gentiles have had *their* full time of place and service, as the Jews had before them.

25, 26. There shall be signs in sun and moon and stars.—Some regard this prophecy as literal; strange phenomena of nature, before the final coming of the Lord. Godet thinks our earth may be "as a ship, creaking in every timber at the moment of its going to pieces." But the Hebrew prophets had used such language to express the downfall of nations. So Isaiah spoke of the destruction of Babylon (xiii. 10); and Ezekiel of the fall of Egypt (xxxii. 7). The heavenly bodies have been used to represent earthly powers and rulers; and the sea, the multitude of people. Governments the mightiest shall be shaken and fall; and great peoples will grow restless and tumultuous. Such has been historically true; it doubtless will be so again. We must understand that Christ did indeed come in power and judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the utter overthrow of Judaism in the abrogation of its worship. To an Israelite the sun would indeed be darkened, and moon and stars fail of light. Christ did indeed come in clouds of power and wrath to some; in clouds of glory unto others. The coming in that generation prefigured one later and grander.

II. BE YE READY.

29-33. Behold the fig tree.—In substance he says, "Watch the course of events; you can tell the season, you can judge what is coming, if you observe well." When you see trees budding and sending out shoots, you have no need to ask about the season. When you see nature tottering, and people in commotion, know that I am coming. **This generation shall not pass.**—He simply declares that within thirty or forty years all that he has been saying shall in detail be fulfilled. The earth and stars may fail to keep their places, but no word of his shall ever fall fruitless or unfulfilled.

32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. accomplished.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

34 And But take heed to yourselves, lest at any time haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon on you unawares: suddenly as a snare:

35 For as a snare so shall it come on upon all them that dwell on the face of all the whole earth.

36 Watch But watch ye therefore, and pray always, at every season, making supplication, that ye may be accounted worthy prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

34, 35. But take heed to yourselves.—"Although you know the day is coming, and that in a few brief years, have care of yourselves; you may be absorbed in the pleasures and business of this life, and be taken unawares; there are general signs that you may read if you care, but the decisive day may come to you silently and suddenly. **For so it shall come upon all.**—The expression is sweeping and significant. All men know that a mighty coming, or, what amounts to the same thing, a dreadful *going*, is near at hand. Death, with its momentous change, its introduction to scenes of illimitable grandeur, is stealing upon us. We know not its day or its hour. And very many, given over to care and vanities of this life, are utterly unprepared.

36. Watch ye at every season.—Be always expecting, and ever ready. He who lives in the presence of the coming life, will live purest, bravest, truest. He will have care not only to have things right before him, but to have things right behind him. He will wish his proper life-work *done*, when he is called. **Making supplication.**—Communing with, and clinging unto heaven, all the time, in prayer. A coming Lord can not surprise such an one; he can only come in greater and sweeter fullness. **That ye may prevail to escape all these things.**—All the terrors and losses and woes which come to the unprepared. As there was peace and security for the Jewish Christians, even beyond the Jordan, so is there peace and safety for every Christian who will trust his Lord and heed his warnings. **And to stand before the Son of man.**—He will be forgiving to the humble, and gentle to the gentle, and loving to the loving. It will not be hard for those who are looking and longing for him to stand even in his glorified presence. How blessed will it be in that great crisis, that decisive hour, *to stand!*

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Days of Vengeance. 20-28. What was to be the sign that the destruction of Jerusalem was near? What means of safety was to be adopted? How was this fulfilled? What was to be the fate of the people? Of Jerusalem? Where were signs to appear? What would be the feelings of men? Whom should they see coming? How does Christ encourage believers who see these things? **2. The Kingdom Nigh.** 29-36. What parable did he speak? How does he apply it? Within what time does he say this shall be accomplished? What shall pass away? What shall not pass away? In what does he charge them to take heed? How shall the day of vengeance come upon all who do not do so? How does he bid them watch? That they may escape what? That they may be able to do what?

COLLECT.

O God, help us to know that thou wilt lead in ways secure the followers of thy Son; that thou wilt keep in perfect peace the hearts stayed upon thee. May we early learn that the place where we ought to be is always safe, and that the path of duty ends on hills of peace. Lead us unto the place where storm-clouds never gather; thy presence, in which is fulness of joys for evermore. Through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A COMING VENGEANCE.—1. Jerusalem the beautiful, the holy city, the heart of Jewish life and hope for centuries, was to be destroyed. No wonder that those who realized this fact imagined that the end of all things was involved. Have men yet ceased to feel, when some disaster changes the whole course of their life, that all the world is different some way that nothing like the old life can ever be lived again? Only the child of God can

> "Be as the bird, that chancing to alight upon a bough too slight,
> Feels it give way beneath her, and yet sings, knowing that she hath wings."

2. *The Warning.*—We should be wise in giving warning to others of coming evil. If it will prepare, it is our sacred duty to give it; if only alarm, it may be withheld. Christ failed not to warn clearly and urgently both friends and foes of the dangers which they might avoid. Only a few ask tremblingly, "When shall these things be?"

> But as when swept by angry winds, the waves more angry swell,
> So o'er that city proud and stern, no contrite silence fell;
> But louder rang her rebel songs, and scornful in her pride,
> Alike the love of Heaven she spurned, and wrath of Heaven defied (*Punshon*).

3. *All Things Fulfilled.*—Vengeance is no more certain than blessing. Two rabbis, we are told, approaching Jerusalem, observed a fox running up the hill of Zion. Aged Rabbi Joshua wept, but Rabbi Eliezer laughed. "Wherefore dost thou weep?" demanded Eliezer. "I weep because I see what was written in the Lamentations fulfilled: 'Because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, the foxes fall upon it.'" "And therefore do I laugh," said Rabbi Eliezer; "for when I see with my own eyes that God has fulfilled his threatenings to the letter, I have thereby a pledge that not one of his promises shall fail, for he is ever more ready to show mercy than judgment."

4. *The Roaring of the Sea.*—As when in a storm the ocean roars, and wave rolls on wave and dashes against the shore, and each surge is more violent than the one which preceded it, so would the calamities come upon Judæa, until the whole country should be left desolate (*Barnes*).

> "While the billows near me roll, while the tempest still is high."

The Lord provided a refuge for his own. But of the apostles only one remained to need an earthly refuge, John. "Christ hid them in the heaven."

5. *Fearful Expectation.*—The consideration of the unchangeableness of the divine counsels which govern all events, should compose and quiet our spirit, whatever happens. God is but performing the thing that is appointed for us, and our inordinate trouble is an interpretative quarrel with that appointment. Let us therefore acquiesce, because these things must come to pass; not only as the product of divine counsel, but as a means to a further end. The old house must be taken down ere the new fabric can be erected; the things that are shaken must be removed, that the things which can not be shaken may remain (*Henry*).

6. *Look Up.*—At the first known eruption of Vesuvius, when all within the compass thought of nothing but that the world was drawing to its dissolution, Pliny, the great philosopher, out of a desire to inform himself, drew near to where he thought the fire began, studied, read, and noted, ate and slept as though in his own closet. This is the emblem of the world's ending and of the behavior which is enjoined on Christians when that time shall come. What though there be signs in the sun and moon and stars? Must my sun set at noon and my stars, those virtues which should shine in my soul, fall out of their sphere? When the world is ready to sink, do thou raise thyself with expectation of eternal glory (*Farindon*).

II. A COMING REDEMPTION.—*Lessons of Nature.*—God has a clock, the fields are the face, the figures are the flowers and birds and leaves. It does not tick, but it lives; it does not strike the hours, only some flowers open out, or die away, when the hour has come. The first quarter of the complete circle is spring, and when you see certain buds

opening you know that the summer is near. When summer comes we shall not be able to go back to the spring-time, and mend what has been wrong. Then learn to grow as the flowers grow; as they follow the sun, follow Jesus with your hearts (*Howatt*). The flowers and fruit which God shall seek for his kingdom when it is nigh, will not be found, unless they have been growing through the year of opportunity.

2. *The Enduring Words.*—When eyes are growing dim, and the heart is ceasing to beat, and heaven and earth are passing away, as they surely will from all of us, what remains for the soul's help and reliance, but the words of Jesus which are the promises of God (*Greenwood*).

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word."

3. *Take Heed.*—(1) That we be not led into gross evils. (2) That the life and heart be not filled with trifling things which hinder our spiritual life and growth. (3) That we do not forget that our strength is in One who is mighty, and that the life-breath of our souls is an atmosphere of prayer. (4) That we be ever doing our duty, so that the end shall not come as a snare, but as a natural change.

4. A total eclipse of the sun many years ago caused great alarm. A legislature, being in session, was about to adjourn, when an old Puritan rose and said: "Mr. Chairman, we are told that our duties are always imminent and obligatory. Some in this house are afraid that the last day has come; I have some suspicion that they are right, but as our duties never cease, as we can not see in this darkness to do business, I move that the candles be brought in, and that we proceed to the order of the day." And may we be found going on with the orders of the day when the light of the last day shall flash upon the world (*Cumming*).

5. *The Greater Thought.*—The New Testament is full of exhortations to watch and prepare for the Lord's coming, whereas we shall hardly find one exhortation, addressed directly to us as Christians, to be ready for the day of our own death. And why so? Clearly because the greater absorbs the less. Christ's coming is the end of redemption, the beginning of glory (*Alford*).

BE FAITHFUL WORK ON AND FEAR NOT WORRY NOT GOD WILL REMEMBER AND RESCUE THEE

JERUSALEM.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.
—Phil. ii. 5.

LESSON X. JUNE 7.

WARNING TO THE DISCIPLES.

Luke xxii. 24-37.

Time.—Evening before the crucifixion, Thursday, April 6, A. D. 30. **Place.**—Upper room in Jerusalem where the Passover feast was being kept.

AND there [was] arose also a [strife] contention among them, which of them [should] is [be] accounted [the] to be greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gĕn'tīles [exercise] have lordship over them; and they that [exercise] have authority [upon] over them are called benefactors.
Benefactors.

I. THE TRUE WAY OF GREATNESS.

EXPLANATORY.

24. There arose also a contention among them.—Pre-eminence is always well, if it is pre-eminence of the right kind. To shine in finer garments, and to feel superior on account of them; to be placed in power, and then mistake an elevation on a pedestal for elevation of soul, is to miss of true beauty and greatness. A silk cocoon may inclose a worm, and a serpent may overpower a dove. The strife among the disciples arose perhaps over the question as to who should have places of honor near the Master at the feast; or who should perform the most needed act of hospitality in washing the other's dust-stained feet. (See John xiii. 12-16). Foot-washing was never enjoined, nor was it practiced, as an ordinance of the church. But it was enjoined, under the conditions and needs of that day, as one of the most characteristic of *good works*. Or, it may be, that, feeling the kingdom must be near, even under the shadow of the cross, they were striving over the *places* they would hold! A mean thing ever is mere *place*-seeking! The worlds "high places" are often won by lowest arts.

> But what will not ambition and revenge
> Descend to? Who aspires must down as low
> As high he soared; obnoxious first or last
> To basest things (*Milton*).

25. The kings of the Gentiles have lordship.—Christ paid very little attention to earthly kings. Sometimes he used them for comparison; here for contrast. Their sway may be important, while their greatness is fictitious. **They that have authority over them are called Benefactors.**—The "great" are fawned upon. Men will seek false distinctions as long as cringing honors are paid to them. The world yet needs emancipation, and a better appreciation of worth and unworth. Excessive wealth is to-day most sought on account of the social distinction and homage it commands. Able men have addressed as "Most Gracious Prince," a man who never did an act of grace, and who consumed on his own beastly lusts the tribute of a people whose loyalty was servile.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, June 1.—Making Ready the Passover (Luke xxii. 1-13).
Tuesday, June 2.—"This Do in Remembrance of Me" (Luke xxii. 14-23).
Wednesday, June 3.—"Which Shall be Greatest?" (Luke xxii. 24-38).
Thursday, June 4.—Grief, and Betrayal (Luke xxii. 39-53).
Friday, June 5.—Peter's Denial (Luke xxii. 54-62).
Saturday, June 6.—Jesus Before the Jewish Council (Luke xxii. 63-71).
Sunday, June 7.—A Scene At the Last Supper (John xiii. 1-11).

26 But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest, *or* the greater among you, let him be, *or* become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether is, *or* is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is, *or* is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you, *or* in the midst of you as he that serveth.

26. But ye shall not be so.—He does away with arbitrary and artificial dominion and distinction. He does not do away with profound homage and humble worship, but will have them given where they are deserved. False worship wrongs God; false esteem, good men. **He that is the greater . . . let him become as the younger.**—This implies no feeling of essential inferiority. Let him have the spirit of deference, and seek to find in others an experience or an excellence that surpasses his own. He is not to put himself forward, but to cultivate the feeling of a junior—which in some respect every man is. **And he that is chief, as he that doth serve.**—A man may have wealth or power and still be most conscientiously the servant of men. He ought to be such; and the greater his ability, the more painstaking should be his service. The man *is* greatest who serves most. The meanest man on earth is the one who takes most from his fellow man and gives least back. In this age we need to be brought back sharply to the teaching of Christ. Blessed is he who helps the world bear its burdens. Accursed is he who needlessly burdens the world. Blessed is he who lifts the fallen and supports the weak. Woe to him who by the toils and privations of others is borne on a life of luxury and idleness! The true follower of Jesus will ever be earnestly studying how he may best lift the world's burdens—may best lift *men*. So may we share the Master's glory.

> "Onward, onward may we press through the path of duty;
> Virtue is true happiness, excellence true beauty."

27. For whether is greater.—"At a feast is not the guest more honored than the servant? Yet I have taken the servant's place." And this was grandly true. As to his nature and mission, he made the loftiest possible claims; but when it came to service, humanity never had such a servant. He denied himself every luxury, and all possible ease and comfort, that he might teach, and heal, and comfort men. He bore the same grace to the lowest service as to the highest, and was alike natural whether he were serving breakfast from a little fire of coals, or stilling a tempest that terrified his followers. He was great to serve, and the value of any man, the greatness of any man, lies in the *service* which he renders.

CHORAZIN.

28 Ye / But ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations;

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Is'ra-el.

31 And the Lord said, Si'mon, Si'mon, behold, Sā'tan hath desired to have asked to have you, that he may / might sift you / you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed / made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou art converted, strengthen / hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go with thee, both into / to prison, and to death.

28-30. But ye are they which have continued.—He seemed to speak gratefully. Through hard trial, and many disappointments, through reproaches, and rejections, they had kept him company. If faith had sometimes been weak, love had never grown cold. **And I appoint unto you a kingdom.**—Here and now; and from that day to the present, the sway of these apostles has grown upon this world. They published their Lord's will, and administered his kingdom. Of most of them we only know the names, but their faith and teaching has a mighty kingdom in the hearts of men. **As my Father appointed unto me.**—They were to share in his kingdom, gaining dominion even as he gained, compelling homage by a matchless service, and winning love by their unconquerable compassion. **That ye may eat and drink at my table.**—As they held a place of wondrous nearness here, so must they ever. Relations can not be ignored, or Divine association on earth lose its effect, in endless years. Peculiar honor will naturally go to those who have endured toil and shame. **Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**—Their preaching of the Gospel, and their broad knowledge of the spirit and purpose of this heavenly kingdom, would give them special fitness for judging. And the salvation of all Israel—the twelve tribes—would depend upon their final attitude to Jesus and his message.

II. FALLING AND RISING AGAIN.

31, 32. Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you.—As though Judas were not enough, the arch enemy of man is represented as plotting for Peter. From his rash and impulsive nature, he was about to meet a fierce trial, and fall. As wheat is shaken and tossed in winnowing, so would Peter be buffeted, until he lost hold on his faith, and himself. **But I made supplication for thee.**—He did not pray that he might be spared trial, but that his faith might survive and not fail. Even so it was. He did not fall into final despair, but rose through sore repentance to a stalwart life. **When once thou has turned again.**—In some respects the most imprudent and weak of the apostles, he was the natural leader of them all. When he returned from this sad downfall, as he did, in grief and shame, he was "rock" to his brethren; he denied his Lord no more.

O, I am weak, but I shall yet be strong;
And I shall fall, yet surely will arise;
For my deep heart is open to thine eyes,
And thou will help, since I to thee belong.

33-37. Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death.—Peter thought so, but the event proved it otherwise. Jesus could see into the future. "Cock crowing" came about three o'clock in the morning, "and this very night," said Jesus, "before the earliest light fairly dawns, you will three times deny that you know me." The Master's words did not prevent the fall; but how they must afterwards have

34 And he said, I tell thee, Pē'ter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, wallet, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

36 Then said he And he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his a wallet: and he that hath no sword, none, let him sell his garment, cloke, and buy one. a sword.

37 For I say unto you, that this that which is written must yet be accomplished fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned among the with transgressors: for the things concerning that which concerneth me have an end. hath fulfillment.

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helped to hope and repentance! **When I sent you forth without purse . . . lacked ye anything?**—Under his care and protection they had hitherto had a comparatively peaceful and pleasant life. Their necessary wants had usually been met without especial provision on their part, upon the spot. **But now, he that hath a purse let him take it.**—The general purport of the verse appears to be a caution against the indolent and fanatical notion that diligence in the use of means is "carnal," and an unlawful dependence on an arm of flesh. We are not to neglect human instrumentality in doing Christ's work, or to expect Christ's approval and blessing if we do not diligently use all lawful means within our reach (*Ryle*). Some people always quote the words to the first "home missionaries" (Luke ix. 3), and forget that here are Christ's final words. He expects his followers to use their best business sense, both in their own affairs, and in the affairs of his kingdom. **Let him sell his cloke, and buy a sword.**—That is, if it is necessary. This does not mean that his disciples shall go out to assail people physically; but it does mean that they shall take all proper precaution to defend themselves; they must not in needless and foolhardy ways throw away their lives. Paul did not propose to have Roman power scourge him, or a Jewish mob kill him, when it could be stopped. There are times when duty leads to death, and then dying is no waste. **This which is written must be fulfilled.**—For the first time he refers to the sad prophecy in the fifty-third of Isaiah. He has come to this now. His earthly ministry must have an end; it is right at hand; but it ends in unspeakable tragedy.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Greatest the Servant. 24-30. What contention arose among the disciples? Who are called benefactors among the Gentiles? What is the way of greatness among Christ's followers? Which is regarded as greater, he who sits at meat, or he who serves? But how was Christ among men? How did he say his apostles had been with him? What therefore did he appoint unto them? Where should they sit? **2. The Servant in the World.** 31-37. What did Jesus say Satan desired of Peter? For what had Jesus made supplication? What did he bid Peter do after his turning from his sin? What did Peter say he was ready to do? What did Jesus answer? What reference did Jesus make to a former commission? Had they lacked by going unprepared? How does he command them now to prepare for their work? What prophecy does he say must be fulfilled in him?

COLLECT.

We pray thee, our Father, that thou wouldst free us from the false ambitions, the selfish strifes, and the wicked enmities of life. Help us to seek with our chief effort that good which lies open alike to all. Give us a passion to be noble servants. May we have a consuming desire not to rise above men, but to lift men; to make the world richer, and wiser, and purer, and happier, because we have lived. Help us to serve as Jesus served; for his dear sake. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

TRUE GREATNESS AND BEAUTY.—1. "*Who Shall be Greater?*"—An old legend says that once three young ladies disputed over their hands as to whose were the most beautiful. One of them dipped her hand in a pure stream, another plucked delicate berries till her fingers were pink, and the third gathered flowers whose fragrance clung to her. An old haggard woman passed by and asked for some help, but all refused her. Another young woman, plain, and with no daintiness of hand, satisfied her need. "Not the hand whitened in the brook, or tinted with fruit, or perfumed with flowers, is fairest," said the woman, "but the hand that forgets itself in ministries of love." As she spake, her wrinkles were gone, her staff was thrown away, and she stood there an angel from heaven. A legend, but truth (*Miller*). The greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution; who resists the sorest temptations from within and from without; who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully; who is the calmest in storms, and whose reliance on truth, on virtue, and on God, is the most unfaltering (*Channing*).

2. *Value Only in Service.*—In a church which Cromwell entered he found some small silver statues. "What are these?" he demanded. "The twelve apostles," was the trembling reply. "Take them down," said he, "and send them to be made into the coin of the realm that they may, like their Master, go about doing good." Beauty, however, is not discarded as an element of service. A beautiful picture is nothing less than a moral force in the world. The Madonna face, the Madonna form, through the centuries rebuke coarseness, teach purity, uplift human thoughts, refine human souls. So with flowers. The windowsill that lifts them up is twice blessed. It blesses him who plants and him who passes. All that is meant is that when beauty stands by herself divorced from service, then the latter is higher, nobler. So with the splendor of mental gifts. Measured by the true standard of human greatness the inventor of the calculus is less of a man than the founder of London's ragged schools. It is better and nobler to help one poor, vicious human life into a pure, happy immortality than to weigh the sun, or write equations for the planets (*Mitchell*).

3. *Helpfulness Immortal.*—Charity never faileth. The beauty of the beneficent deed, the widow's two mites, the alabaster box of ointment, Sir Philip Sidney's cup of cold water, the passing shadow of Florence Nightingale, which the dying soldier strove to kiss, and above all the patient and gentle self-denial of the Christ-life,—these are pictures which the world, God's world, after all, will not let fade. The suns of centuries rise and set upon them (*Mitchell*).

4. *Beauty of Humility.*—"He is the most lovely professor who is the most lowly professor. An incense smells the sweetest when beaten the smallest, so saints look fairest when they lie lowest." Arrogance in the soul resembles the spleen in the body, which grows most while the other parts are decaying. God will not suffer such a weed to grow in his garden, without taking some course to root it up (*Secker*).

"O blessed, if the soul be white,
To breathe and blossom in the dark."

5. *Not Alone in Temptation.*—A blessed privilege it was to the disciples to have been with the Master in temptations in his time of trial. If ever God needed man, it was when the Divine One, with the human nature, in his times of pain and loneliness found comfort in the companionship of those who loved him. And in turn he was with them; he is with us, in temptation. Said a dying boy, who had heard the tempter whispering that he was too great a sinner to be saved: "He is still lurking near, but Jesus is nearer. There is light in the valley."

6. *The Sifting of a Soul.*—The winds of temptation blow, and the poor, lightly weighted souls are carried away; while the strong ones are stripped of many things in which they trusted, and the true power of principle becomes more evident in their lives. The question of the winnowing floor is always repeated: Are you wheat or chaff? (*Brooks*).

7. *Resistance of Sin.*—As the oak grows more vigorous on the bleak hilltop than in the hothouse, as the muscles become firmer by rowing against the stream instead of

drifting with the tide, so does the soul grow stronger by every sin conquered, every temptation overcome.

We rise by the things that are under feet;
By what we have mastered of good and gain;
By the pride deposed, and the passion slain;
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet (*Holland*).

8. *Repentance From Sin.*—An old man sat dreaming about his past, regretting his mistakes and follies, and wishing that he had never committed them. He made a list of twenty things, and was about to seize an imaginary sponge and rub them out of his biography, thinking how much more beautiful it would have been without them. But he found that if there were any golden threads running through his life they had been wrought there by the regrets felt at wrongs; and that by wiping out the wrongs he would destroy whatever of nobleness or beauty there was in his character. There is a a deep truth here, but we must remember that it is only Christ who can make our sins yield blessing (*Miller*).

9. *Sin's Victory May Become Defeat.*—(1) One design of permitting Christians to fall into sin, is to show their weakness and dependence on God; and (2) they who have been overtaken in this manner should make use of their own experience to warn and preserve others from the same path (*Barnes*).

And the powers of darkness tremble,
Though they sway the souls of men;
For our God is king resistless,
And will claim his own again.

10. *The Fighting Christian.*—The sword of the Spirit is the sword which Christians must arm themselves with. Christ having suffered for us, we must arm ourselves with the same mind, arm ourselves with an expectation of trouble, that it may not be a surprise to us, and with a holy resignation to the will of God in it, that there may be no contradiction in us to it; and then we are better prepared than if we had sold our coat to buy a sword (*Henry*). We battle *not against flesh and blood;* our battles lie within our own soul. "One shadowy army fighting another, and the slain shadows forever rising again." Some day our Captain will lead a charge which shall put them to flight forever.

THE SELFISH ARE SMALL
NAUGHTY HATEFUL
BENEVOLENT BEAUTIFUL
MEEK MIGHTY
GOOD GREAT

JERICHO.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
—1. Cor. xv. 3.

LESSON XI. JUNE 14.

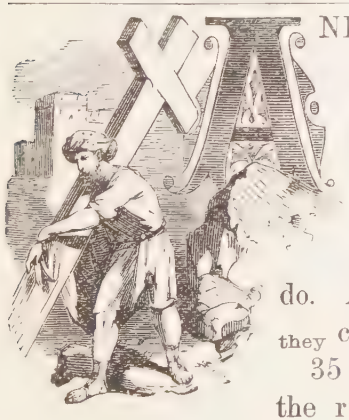
JESUS CRUCIFIED.

Luke xxiii. 33-46.

Time.—Friday, April 7, A. D. 30. **Place.**—Calvary, a hill just outside Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—All that is known about the place of the crucifixion is derived from two statements of the Scriptures; first, the statement of Hebrews xiii. 12, that he suffered without the gate; and second, that of John xix. 20, that it was "nigh to the city." In the absence of any other statements on the subject, we have nothing to guide us in locating the spot except the suitableness of the surface outside the several gates; and this is indecisive, because suitable surface is found just outside the eastern, the northern, and the western gates. True, some modern visitors to the city have imagined that they can see a resemblance between a certain knoll of rock just outside the northern gate, and the shape of a man's skull; and this has led them, in their desperate effort to find some means of identification, to fix upon this as "the skull." But no one would have dreamed of the resemblance if he had not been straining his imagination to find it; and there are so many circumstances which might have led the people of the city to call a spot "the skull," that nothing can be safely inferred from this imaginary resemblance. It is better to infer that it was the purpose of God that the exact spot should never be known by later generations, lest they should pay to it some of the homage that is due the Great Sufferer himself. Such was the divine purpose, no doubt, in concealing absolutely from the earlier Jews the burial place of Moses. The wisdom of this concealment in the case of Jesus is demonstrated by the history of a place fixed upon in the fourth century for both the cross and the sepulchre, of which the most certain thing that can be said is, that it is not the real place of either. It is inside the city now, and recent excavations which show where the ancient wall ran, prove that it was inside at the time of the event. A church, called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was built over the spot, and an artificial sepulcher of Italian marble was constructed in it, and from that day to this, this fraudulent sepulchre has been an object of almost idolatrous adoration. It was to rescue it from the hands of infidels that the wars of the Crusades were undertaken in the Middle Ages, costing millions of treasure, and the lives of perhaps a million of men. If such have been the evils of a falsely located Golgotha, what might have been if men had all through the ages known the real spot?

Introductory.—A night which was a culmination of sorrow, is ended. Jesus lingered with his disciples at the Passover supper, warned them, comforted them, prayed for them (John xiv. 17). He prayed in Gethsemane; saw betrayal and desertion; was arrested, and summarily condemned by the Jewish council; was cruelly scourged and condemned against the better judgment of the unjust and indifferent Pilate; and now has been brought to his place of death.



AND when they (were come to / came unto) the place (Cal'va-ry, / The skull), there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

34 (Then said Jesus, / And Jesus said,) Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And (they parted / parting) his (raiment, and / garments among) them, they cast lots.

35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also (with them derided *him*, / scoffed at him) saying,

He saved others; let him save himself, if he be this is the Christ, the chosen of God; his chosen.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And saying, If thou be art the king of the Jews, save thyself.

I. LIFTED UP TO DIE.

EXPLANATORY.

33. When they came unto the place.—The earthly pilgrimage of Jesus is over, his path ends at the cross. He is alone with his enemies. Jewish hate is following to see itself gratified; and Roman discipline knows no mercy to a condemned prisoner. **There they crucified him.**—Upon the cross, before it was elevated, the body of Jesus was extended. His hands were stretched out and spiked to the cross-bar; his feet were nailed to the wood below. Then the cross was raised, and planted with a cruel shock. To the eyes of the crowd Jesus was not alone in these hours. There were three crosses and he hung a central figure, the chief of malefactors. And yet scorn and taunt, the cruelest punishment of men's hate, were his alone. Death by crucifixion was a refinement of cruelty. In agony and shame men were held fast to death. Unnatural constraint and excess of pain made movement unavoidable, and every movement brought darting pains from wounds which speedily inflamed. If one hung for any length of time upon a cross it was hardly ever possible to save life, if he were taken down alive. The inflammation spread, a high fever arose, and a most torturing thirst. So the hours went on, until some violent cramp, or from sheer vital exhaustion, life went out.

34. Jesus said, Father, forgive them.—These are the first words after the bitter pangs of the cross were felt. Men were making mistakes; on the part of some it was a most guilty mistake, and the great heart of love, in the moment of intensest agony, seems to overlook all. Earth never beheld such a scene; malignant and triumphant hate, met only by the tenderest and most forgiving love. McLaren says that this prayer implies the truth that ignorance diminishes sin, but that it does not annihilate sin; for if there were no sin, there needed no pardon. All sin has the element of ignorance. If men knew how much blessedness they lose, and how much misery they incur by sin, surely they would not sin. But ignorance may be guilty, because voluntary and arising from love of darkness. **Parting his garments among them.**—The garments of those condemned fell to the soldiers who were executioners. In each account of the crucifixion there are little wayside incidents that powerfully attest the truthfulness of the narrative.

35-39. And the people stood beholding.—A hush seems to have fallen over the scene. The crowd of bystanders were awed as they at first gazed silently on the dying form of the great teacher. What memories must have swayed up in the hearts of many of the gazers, and what dire discord is such a death for such a life! Such a silent awe-struck contemplation was dangerous, the rulers felt, so they hastened to commence their mockery,—"to clear the stifling air, and deafen the voice which was stirring even within themselves. 'Look now,' they would cry, 'at the end of the man who said he could do, and pretended to do, such strange, unheard-of things.' They seem to have induced many to join in their mocking cries and gestures, and so to break the awful silence" (*P. C.*). **The soldiers also mocked him.**—Not difficult for Roman soldiers, trained to deeds of violence and cruelty. They offered—not the stupefying drink that was tendered in his first moments of crucifixion, but a cup of their sour wine, in mock homage. **There was also a superscription.**—A white tablet was properly nailed on the cross proclaiming

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, June 8.—Jesus Before Pilate and Herod (Luke xxiii. 1-12).

Tuesday, June 9.—Pilate's Condemnation (Luke xxi. 13-32).

Wednesday, June 10.—The Crucifixion (Luke xxiii. 33-46).

Thursday, June 11.—The Burial of Jesus (Luke xxiii. 47 56).

Friday, June 12.—Wounded for Our Transgressions (Is. liii. 1-12).

Saturday, June 13.—The Blood of Jesus Cleanseth (I. John i. 1-10).

Sunday, June 14.—The Lesson in Mark (Mark xv. 21 41).

38 And there was also a superscription also was written over him, in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If Art not thou be the Chrīst, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering, rebuked answered, and rebuking him saying, said, Dost not thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jē'sus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into in thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. Paradise.

44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness came over all the earth whole land until the ninth hour;

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the crime for which the offender suffered. This superscription was Pilate's work; and while it displeased the Jewish leaders, he could write nothing other or better. Jesus did die as king of the Jews; not the king they wanted, but still their king.

II. A FRIEND ON THE CROSS.

39-43. One of the malefactors . . . railed on him.—These malefactors were robbers, perhaps had belonged to the band of Barabbas. One of them, perhaps to gain favor and compassion from the crowd, taunted Jesus. He thinks the Christ has no place on a cross. He would put the king to the test. Like the old Jews, and many since, he would spike Jesus to a cross and then bid him come down. But he will not come; he will die *for*—and he may die *to*—his murderers. **But the other answered, and rebuking him.**—He first addresses his companion. Perhaps both men, in the first madness of their agony and despair, had reviled Jesus, but one soon felt his mistake. He heard the prayer of Jesus, and saw heroic gentleness, and his heart was won. "How can you speak so?" he says. "This man is the companion of our suffering. We well deserve death, but this man has done no evil." And then turning to Jesus, he said,—**Remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.**—He perhaps had a very imperfect idea of what the kingdom would be, but the overmastering *goodness* of Jesus led him to repose an utter trust in him. Trench says, to believe that he, whose only token of royalty was the crown of thorns that still clung to his bleeding brow, was a king and had a kingdom—to believe that he, on whose eyes the mists of death were already hanging, was indeed the Prince of life, wielding in those precious hands, nailed so hopelessly to the cross, the keys of death and hades; that it could profit something in that mysterious world to which they were both hastening, to be remembered of this crucified man—that was faith indeed.

43. To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.—In the Eden beyond, "the beautiful park where the blessed are"; so the penitent thief would understand it. What a day to that dying man! Its morning saw him a culprit, condemned before the bar of earthly judgment; before evening shadowed the hill of Zion he stood accepted at the bar of heaven. The morning saw him led out through an earthly city's gates in company with one who was denied by the crowd that gathered around him; before night fell upon Jerusalen, the gates of another city were lifted up, and he went through them in company with one around whom all the hosts of heaven were bowing down. Humblest believer in Jesus, a like marvelous contrast is in store for you. This hour a darkened chamber, a bed of racking pain, tears, and farewells; the next hour, up and away in the balmy air of the paradise of God, mingling with the spirits of the just made

45 And the sun was darkened, The sun's light failing: and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 And when Jē'sus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, this, he gave up the ghost.

perfect, renewing death-broken friendships, gazing on the unveiling glories of the Lamb. Be thou but faithful unto death, thou too shalt be with him in paradise (*Dr. Hanna*).

III. IT IS FINISHED.

44. It was now about the sixth hour.—Twelve o'clock, as we measure time. A change came over the land. The sky drew dark. The incidents told of the crucifixion come from the earlier hours; the later are silent in the darkness and the dying. The longer utterances of Jesus, his forgiving prayer, his committal of his mother to John's care (John xix. 26), his blessing on the dying thief, were made before the weakness of death were upon him. The taunts of the multitude died away. At nine o'clock, when the crosses were reared, there were clamorous voices; before noon they were silent, and before Jesus gave his last heart-broken and yet triumphant cry, men were awe-stricken. What *he* endured in those last darkening hours we can not know. It takes the direst pain to rend so soon the vigorous and beautiful life; and yet through all we know he was the same humble, faithful, forgiving, and loving Son of God. He will have beauty as he sits enthroned in glory; but where to his redeemed can there be such beauty as when on the cross his gentleness shone gentler in his agony, and in his growing weakness his faithful love was loveliest. **The veil of the temple was rent in the midst.**—This was the great veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of the Holies—the inner sanctuary which was kept from the eyes of men, save the high priest. This veil was sixty feet long and thirty feet wide, of heavy and rich material. The rending would signify that the Holy of Holies in heaven is opened to all men through the sacrifice of Christ. The type has served its purpose; and spiritual worship takes the place of the formal and visible.

46. When he had cried with a loud voice.—For six burning hours Jesus hung upon the cross. He was worn with severest toil, and long watching, and almost deadly scourging before he came to it. The hate of men has directly helped to kill him. A bitter and perhaps broken cry of soul agony,—"My God, my God! Why has thou forsaken me?" indicates that the end is near. He says, "I thirst," the only word of physical pain which he spoke on the cross. He gathered his strength for one last great victorious cry, "It is finished." And then with the grateful committal of a child so weary,—"Father, unto thy hands I commend my spirit," he breathed his life out, and the sublime tragedy is done.

The centurion, who had charge of the crucifixion, and who all the day stood indeed beneath the shadow of the cross, said: "Truly this was a righteous man."

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Night of Hope. 32-38. Who were put to death with Christ? Where did the crucifixion take place? What was the prayer of Jesus? What was done with his garments? What mocking words did the rulers use? What did the soldiers do and say? What was the accusation written above him? **2. A Voice Through the Night.** 39-43. What did one of the malefactors say to Jesus? How did the other rebuke him? What request did the second make? What did Jesus answer? **3. The Last Silence.** 44-46. What unusual appearance came over the land? Between what hours? What occurred in the temple? What was the significance of this? What were Jesus' last words?

COLLECT.

Our Father, God, help us to behold in truth the scene upon the cross. May we not stand with careless mockers, but behold to wonder and to mourn. May it teach us our hate, thy love; our sin, thy goodness; our need, and thy compassion. May we gratefully devote our lives to him, who gave his life for us. May his love, so tender, true, and strong, win all our hearts, and hold them to the endless years. And we will praise thee. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A SEEMING DEFEAT.—1. *The End of the Way.*—The shadow of the cross rests on all the incidents and words of his public life. Nowhere does the sun of his life shine in a clear sky. The darkness is denser here and thinner there, but it is everywhere; as the twilight creeps noiselessly into evening's sunniest nooks and quietly masters all the land without the winnowing of its silken wing being heard or seen." Calvary is a low hill, but it casts a long shadow (*Meyer*).

2. *The Tragedy of Calvary.*—There is a picture I have seen somewhere, painted by a celebrated artist. The body of Jesus has been conveyed to the sepulcher, the cross itself lies extended on the ground, and a band of little children are represented as bending over the signs left around of the bloody deed that day accomplished. One holds in his hands a nail, lately piercing the hand or foot of the patient sufferer, and stands spell-bound with horror, gazing at it And upon every face the painter has plainly depicted the verdict which innocence must ever give with regard to the dreadful tragedy. It is so we would desire to consider the subject and the scene. The heart, conceiving aright the amazing impiety culminating at the cross, may well take this attitude of wonder, surprise, horror (*Baxendale*).

3. *The Three Crosses.*—See these three crosses. Here is a representation of heaven, of the church, of hell; here is a picture of the great judgment, the saved on the right hand, the lost on the left, Jesus in their midst; here is an object for worship, a sight for praise, a spectacle for tears; here in a figure we see the three stages in the life of every saint. Approach the cross of the impenitent—here is man by nature totally depraved. Approach the penitent's cross—here is a man totally changed, thirsting after God and heaven. Approach Christ's cross—here is man perfect, meet for heaven (*Stems and Twigs*).

4. *The Prayer for His Enemies.*—Forgiveness is easier for God to give than for man to take. Forgiveness can not be received by every one. If a man says he forgives me, I can only accept his word, if I believe I need his forgiveness, if I am conscious of having offended him. The only channel through which we can receive forgiveness from God is by accepting it as men who have done wrong, who know the wrong they have done, and have confessed and hated it (*Watson*). Even God can not give spiritually what man will not take.

5. *Crucified Afresh.*—Is he a greater robber than Barabbas, that he is to be crucified? He has stolen away what Barabbas could not touch. He has taken from the law its curses. He has torn from death its sting. He has despoiled the grave of its terror and its victory. Is not this a notable robber? But, O unnatural retribution which clamors for the cross for such an one as this. And, alas, Calvary is not merely at Jerusalem. Look over the arena which you have crossed during the last week of your life, you will see the place where the cross has been reared afresh there. Oh! think not ye daily triflers with the grace of the loving God, that there is no place near you where Jesus is not crucified. Every spot you stain by sin; wherever you have trampled on the fair commands of God; wherever the Spirit has been quenched, and the restraint neglected, is a Calvary; and there, in that unwilling and listless heart of yours, there you crucify afresh the Lord of glory, and put him to an open shame (*Mursell*).

II. BUT ONLY SEEMING.—1. *A Glimpse Beyond.*—Learn from a strange teacher that Victim and Lord are compatible terms. Learn that a man may transciently be at the very depth of his history, that he may come up from that with a fuller luster to the height of his power. Dost thou only know a king when he is upon a throne? O that the Lord God of Elijah and Elisha would open thine eyes, poor servants, to see within the thronging soldier host a circle of angels, keen as lightning, terrible as fire, defensive as almightiness. The malefactor did more than see the Lord in the victim; he saw life beyond death. Dying on the cross? "I can not die; if this Man take me in charge, death will be but a momentary shadow." The little mind said: "Take me down from the cross." The great one said: "Let us go through this tunnel into the beautiful landscape." Did not this dying malefactor say more than some of us have ever said? He defended Christ, he hailed him Lord, he ascribed to him a kingdom, he triumphed over death, he saw the crown above the cross (*Parker*).

2. *God's Shadows.*—

"Veiled in unearthly shadows,
As on a darkened theater, was wrought
The tragedy that moved the universe,
And molded all its destinies anew."

He saw far down the street a mighty shadow break the light of noon, which, tracing backward, till its airy lines hardened to stony plinths, he raised his eyes o'er broad facade and lofty pediment, o'er architrave, and frieze and sainted niche, up the stone lace work chiseled by the wise Erwin of Steinbach, to where in the moon's brightness the great Minster's town, jeweled with sunbeams on its mural crown, rose like a visible prayer. "Behold," he said, "as yonder tower outstretches to the earth the dark triangle of its shade alone, when the clear day is shining on its top, so darkness in the pathway of man's life is but the shadow of God's providence, by the great sun of wisdom cast thereon; and what is dark below is light in heaven (*Whittier*).

3. *The Rent Vail.*—

Jehovah be praised, he remembers his own,
No more is he hidden afar on his throne,
For the way to the holiest Christ has made plain,
And the vail of the temple is rended in twain.

4. *Finished.*—There was no stopping place for infinite love until all was complete. There was a colliery accident in the north of England. The mine was flooded and there were still some of the miners imprisoned below. Rescue parties were made up and sent down. It was hard, and they had to work in relays. One man, however, it was noticed kept working all the time. Others told him that he would kill himself, and asked him to stop and rest. But he answered: "How can I stop? There are some of my own down there." Is it not in some such way that Christ came down to seek his own on earth, and to give his life for them (*S. S. Times*)?

5. *The Last Words.*—Such words at the moment of death would be useless were not the spirit already his to whom it is commended; a few hours may be enough, but it is a fearful risk to run when eternity is at stake. How much of trust and peace they express when they are simply yielding up of the soul to one whose rights were long ago conceded.

O soul forlorn,
Know death is dawn!
For death conceals yet half reveals
The twilight way
That man must go twixt star-lit life
And heavenly day (*C. S. Newhall*).

DYING AGONY DESCENT TO GLORY
DEATHLESS AFFECTION ASCENT TO GRAVE

MORNING.

LESSON XII. JUNE 21.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The Lord is risen indeed. —Luke xxiv. 34.

THE RISEN LORD.

Luke xxiv. 36-53.

Time.—The events of the lesson occurred at various times from the resurrection on Sunday, April 9, to the ascension day, Thursday, May 18, A. D. 30.

Places.—Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives.

Introductory.—When the hate of his enemies was accomplished, the body of Jesus was left in the hands of his friends. They wrapped it tenderly and laid it away in an honored tomb.

The peaceful Sabbath comes, and he sleeps well.
The grave is sweeter than the cross.

On the morning of the first day of the week, when friends come to complete their ministrations of burial, there are strange surprises. Others beside mortals have been watching the tomb, and the one they seek, "now walking midway betwixt earth and heaven," gives them interrupted yet familiar greetings.

Jesus appears—(1) To Mary Magdalene, near the tomb (Mark xvi. 9); (2) to other women visiting the tomb (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10); (3) to Peter alone (Luke xxiv. 34); (4) to two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 15). The fifth appearance is at the opening of to-day's lesson. All these appearances were on one day—the day of resurrection.

AND as they (thus) spake, (Jesus these things,) he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they (had seen beheld) a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and (why wherefore) do (thoughts reasonings) arise in your (hearts? heart?)

EXPLANATORY.

I. A SURE REVELATION

36, 37. As they spake these things.—The two disciples with whom Jesus journeyed to Emmaus, after he had revealed himself, and vanished, had hastened back to Jerusalem; and finding the apostles and a company of Jesus' friends gathered—as they naturally would be after the surprising disclosures of the day—they made known their own strange and delightful experience. While they were speaking—**He himself stood in the midst of them.**—"The doors being closed," as John tells us, unannounced, there Jesus stood! And then, to calm their hearts, he gave them the assuring greeting, "Peace unto you." **But they were terrified.**—They had been speaking of him, they were hoping to see him again, and yet his presence startled them. It seemed impossible to adjust their hearts to the strange fact. His presence could be accounted for in no ordinary or natural way, and they felt it must be an apparition.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, June 15.—Angels, and an Empty Tomb (Luke xxiv. 1-12).
Tuesday, June 16.—The Walk to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13-32).
Wednesday, June 17.—"Peace Unto You" (Luke xxiv. 33-43).
Thursday, June 18.—The Last Charge and the Departure (Luke xxiv. 44-53).
Friday, June 19.—The Ascension (Acts i. 1-14).
Saturday, June 20.—"Who is on the Right Hand of God?" (I. Peter iii. 8-22).
Sunday, June 21.—The Great Commission (Matt. xxviii. 9-20)

39 Behold (See) my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see (behold) me have (having).

40 And when he had thus spoken, (said this,) he shewed them his (his) hands and his (his) feet.

41 And while they yet believed not (still disbelieved) for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? (anything to eat?)

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43 And he took it, (it,) and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, These are the (are my) words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must

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38–40. Why are ye troubled?—He spake assuringly to them. He knows the limitations of those who only grope amid mortality, and how hard it is for those in the material life to grasp the spiritual. But he feels that they better should have learned the lesson he has taught, and risen above their present questionings. **See my hands and my feet.**—He would have them know that this is more than an empty appearance, more than a phantasm. It is the veritable Master whom they had known, the one they had seen hanging on the cross. His relations, his way of intercourse with them, must henceforth change; but he can be seen and touched. If his body has been refined, and has more than mortal powers, he is still most gloriously real. He particularly shows that he carries the marks of his wound; and long after, in a vision of glory, the revelator declares,—"In the midst of the throne . . . stood a lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. v. 6).

41–43. While they still disbelieved for joy.—The disciples gradually come to realize a fact that seems too good to be true. Their joy is evidence that the truth has entered their hearts, even if some doubt and fears still linger. **Have ye here anything to eat?**—He continues to teach them his personal identity, to show that he can share and commune with them just as in the days that are gone. He brings their minds down from that state of wondering ecstasy to the region of familiar and every day life. He eats some broiled fish—or, as we would say, he takes a lunch with them.

"*That thou mightest know the certainty*" (Luke i. 4).—

Reality, reality,
Lord Jesus Christ, thou art to me!
From the spectral mists and driving clouds,
From the shifting shadows and phantom crowds;
From unreal words and unreal lives,
Where truth with falsehood feebly strives;
From the passings away, the chance and change,
Flickerings, vanishings, swift and strange,
I turn to my glorious rest on thee,
Who art the grand Reality (*Miss Havergal*).

II. PARTING WORDS.

44. These are my words.—Luke here gives a brief summary of the teaching of Jesus during the forty days that he tarried on earth after his resurrection. He enlarges his recital somewhat at the opening of his later work, the book of Acts. **While I was yet with you.**—This expression implies that the human sojourn of Jesus on earth was in the past. He is still on earth, but no longer to strive and suffer as in the past. He meets and reveals himself only to his own. Properly his habitation henceforth is in heaven, and not

needs be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Mō'ses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, mind, that they might understand the scriptures;

46 And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved that the Chrīst to should suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day;

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among unto all the nations, beginning at from Je-ru'sa-lĕm.

48 And Ye ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, of Je-ru'sa-lem, until ye be endued clothed with power from on high.

50 And he led them out as far as to until *they* were over against Bĕth'a-ny, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

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earth. **How that all things must needs be fulfilled.**—He calls their minds to the Old Testament, whose types and prophecies, as they compare them with his life, will be to them a constant and growing proof of his Messiahship. God's promise must have been kept; and he must have suffered as he did, because it was prophesied, and because the only plan for man's redemption demanded such a sacrifice.

45–47. Then opened he their minds.—It was easy to teach lessons now which could not be taught before. The cross could not be explained until it had been reared; and the idea of a spiritual kingdom could not be grasped without a risen Lord; then all could be made plain. It had been plainly written that Christ must suffer and rise—this was the summit of prophecy, and this is substance of true preaching; Paul connects a third term, burial, and calls it the gospel (I. Cor. xv. 1-5). **And that repentance.**—Repentance here, as everywhere, means the change of mind and purpose. It is an antecedent condition of the remission of sins. It is the change which is realized when the man first exercises faith. The two things move together. If Christ has suffered and entered into glory, then he is the one in whom the man must believe; and faith and repentance are, and are to be preached, in his name (*Dr. Dwight*). **Unto all the nations.**—It took the apostles years to understand what this meant. It has taken the church of our day a long time to learn. But Jesus' words were clear from the beginning. **Beginning from Jerusalem.**—The starting place of the preaching of repentance and remission of sins is plain. Sometimes men do not enough attend to this. **Ye are witnesses.**—They were to tell what they had seen and heard. They were to speak, not from fancies or feelings, but from facts. Men may to-day testify of the benign effects of Christ through his gospel upon mind and heart; but they can not witness as did the apostles, "Whose eyes had seen, and hands had touched, the King invisible, the Word of life."

49. Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father.—This was the promise of the Holy Spirit. It had been well assured to them in Christ's last discourse on the night of the Passover supper (John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 7-14). **But tarry ye in the city.**—They were to be witnesses to all nations of the sufferings and exaltation of Christ; the preaching of repentance and remission of sins in his name, was to *begin* at Jerusalem, but not yet. When they were "clothed with power from on high," when the promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled upon them, then they were not to tarry. This was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, a little more than a week later, as is told in the second chapter of Acts.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he [was] parted from them, and [was] carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Je-ru'sa-lĕm with great joy:

53 And were continually in the temple, [praising and] blessing God. [Amen.]

50, 51. He led them out until they were over against Bethany.—He has tarried on earth for forty days, while his home was rightly otherwhere. He has met his followers frequently enough to assure them that he lives, and is to them the same compassionate Master; and yet not so frequently as to lead them to lean upon him in his humanity. Earth never had, nor can have again, such lofty and blessed communion as came from his presences. Nevertheless it was expedient for the world that he go away; go to receive his kingdom, and begin that beneficent reign wherein lay all man's hope for blessedness in earth or heaven. He led his chosen witnesses, and a few nearer friends, over familiar paths once more, and halted on a retired spot near Bethany. There is parting here, and yet not separation; the Master in heaven, and his disciples on earth, will still work together. He reaches out his hands to bless them. **While he blessed them, he departed from them.**—Hitherto, since his resurrection, it would seem that his appearances and vanishings had been things of a moment. He comes, he goes, they know not how, or where. But now they see whither he goes; they can not expect to meet him in the olden way, until in glory he shall come back. Reaching blessings from his pierced hands he slowly rises, until a cloud of glory hides him from their sight. Dr. Westcott says: "The physical elevation was a speaking parable, an eloquent symbol, but not the truth to which it pointed, or the reality which it foreshadowed. The change which Christ revealed by the ascension was not a change of place, but a change of state; not local, but spiritual. Still, from the necessities of our human condition, the spiritual change was represented sacramentally, so to speak, in an outward form. He passed beyond the sphere of man's sensible existence to the open presence of God."

52, 53. They worshipped him, and returned.—As he returned to the presence and communion of God, men's worship is perfected. They worship Jesus with profounder homage; the Father with more familiar love. They abide in joy. When Jesus has vanished, angels linger to reassure them (Acts i. 10, 11). The knowledge that they are to carry on their Master's work, and that he will give them still his guidance, is sufficient for them. They were daily in the temple at the hours of prayer; for they had found that the joy of holy fellowship with each other, was linked with fellowship with heaven.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Messenger Prepared. 36-43. Of what were the disciples speaking? Who stood in the midst? What was his salutation? What did the disciples think of this appearance? What did Jesus ask? How did he proceed to show that he was not a spirit? Did they immediately believe? What further proof did Jesus give? **2. The Message Given.** 44-53. What did he remind them that he had said before his death? What power did he give them? What did he say was written of the Christ? What should be preached? To whom? Beginning where? What were the disciples? What was Christ's promise? His command? Where did he lead them? What was his parting act? What happened while he was doing so? What did the disciples do? What was their state of mind?

COLLECT.

We thank thee, O God, for that blessed One who brought heaven to earth; who broke the power of darkness, and whose life is the light of men. We thank thee that he has been on earth, and that he is in heaven, where best he can teach and guide us, and where we can be with him when the darkness of the grave is past. May we follow him in life and death. In his dear name we pray. Amen.

Hints for Blackboard Talks.

LESSON VI.—SECOND QUARTER.

The smoke of the incense did not ascend any higher to the heavens than the smoke from the altars of idolatry. But the spirit of obedient worship went clear to the throne of God. All repetitions of the name of God are not prayers. All prayers that are offered do not reach the throne. There are some prayers that have not the spirit God wants. The true prayer is from the humble heart and is a breathing of a contrite spirit to a heavenly Father. The prayer of faith is the prayer that reaches heaven, and comfort comes back. Rest and peace.

LESSON VIII.—SECOND QUARTER.

It is natural to seek happiness. Some seek it one way, some another. Many try everything to find that they have not won what they sought. Others find at last that in the love of Jesus Christ is the truest happiness. We may turn from one thing to another in the feverish hope of finding the way of life; but when we turn to the Book, it says, seek Christ. We have no lucid or intelligent direction to find happiness and peace in any other way than to look to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the keystone of the arch. The one and only one that can support any real happiness. Let us not waste time seeking elsewhere.

LESSON X.—SECOND QUARTER.

Every human soul has something in it that is Christlike. The lowest and most degraded of human beings has some spark of the Divine love and hopefulness. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; it means far more than the average Christian is willing to admit. Until we take Christ fully and completely into the heart, we can not realize what it is to be and do as Christ would have us do. To be able to say honestly and fully, "I will say what you want me to say, my Lord; I will do what you want me to do," is not easy. Consecration to the service, steadily looking to the Christ—these things are essential if we would have that mind that is in Christ.

LESSON V.—SECOND QUARTER.

In ancient times when a warrior went out to battle, he carried not only weapons of offense, but he carried his shield for defense. He was not fully armed unless he was prepared to defend himself against the spears and arrows of the enemy. We can not expect to be in peaceful possession of the peace that passes all understanding. The arrows of doubt fly thick and fast about us. The tempter is present with his insinuations. He would beat down our guard. He would try to make us lose our peace. Then the shield of faith is needed. Thus saith the Lord. This will help us over the hard places. He will keep us. We must hold fast to the faith that not only saves, but keeps.

LESSON VII.—SECOND QUARTER.

We all hope to meet the Master. We all intend to meet him with gifts. We intend some day, somehow, to lay up the gifts that he will appreciate, and for which we will receive that richest of all praise, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." When will we do these things? The Master has given us the gift. He will surely ask an accounting. What will the answer be—I had not time? I intended to do more for the Lord? I had no opportunity? I was afraid? There will be some who will bow with humble hearts to receive the Master's "Well done," while others are shamefaced that they have naught to offer.

LESSON IX.—SECOND QUARTER.

All things human pass away. All nature is a picture of the absolute condition of decay. We are not sad at the picture of decay in nature, because we have seen the new birth bring each year fresh and seasonable beauty.

The opinions of men change. The theories of the ages disappear, but through all the centuries the light that shines from Calvary illumines the hope of eternal life. My word shall not pass away, saith the Lord, and we have every reason to have faith in the word. Time will pass for us, and eternity dawn. We can not escape the Word. It will be the realization of the thought that spans from time to eternity. The Word was God.

Have Faith
in
God
Les.V. 2nd quar
May 3rd 1896.

True Prayer is from an Humble Heart
Les.VI. 2nd quar
May 10th 1896.

For the Lord
Faithfulness
Neglect
How much will you have when the Master comes?
Les.VII. 2nd quar
May 17th 1896.

No Other Name Can Save
Les.VIII. 2nd quar
May 24th 1896.

My Word Shall not Pass away
Les.IX. 2nd quar
May 31st 1896.

We shall like Him be
Les.X. 2nd quar
June 7th 1896

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE DISCIPLES WERE NOT CREDULOUS.—1. They never expected that Jesus would die. They said, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up?" Of course if they never thought he would die, they equally never expected resurrection. 2. As soon as he was dead, they gave up all hope of ever seeing him alive again. They gave the body and the tomb over to the women, never thinking that there was anything further for them to do there. 3. When Mary came back and said she had seen him, they utterly refused to believe her. 4. When her witness was confirmed by the other women, their words appeared to the disciples as idle tales. 5. When Peter and John visited the empty grave, they saw that the body was not there, but it never dawned on them that he had risen; they were only convinced that in some way his body had been taken away. 6. When the two walked to Emmaus, they failed to recognize or even suspect who he was until they saw him break the bread. 7. When he appeared to the ten (in the present lesson) they thought that he was a ghost, and were slow to think that it was their Master risen from the dead. 8. In spite of the testimony of the ten, Thomas refused to believe. It was too wonderful a thing for him, and he felt the others had in some way been deceived. 9. At the great gathering in the mountain in Galilee, where there were five hundred brethren at once, all worshiped, "but some doubted"—could not realize that the vision before them was real. The fact is, the disciples were not credulous, and they had no conceivable motive to falsify. So it appears to those best trained to sifting evidence, that no miracle in the Word of God, and no event in history, is better attested than the resurrection of Jesus (*Schauffler*).

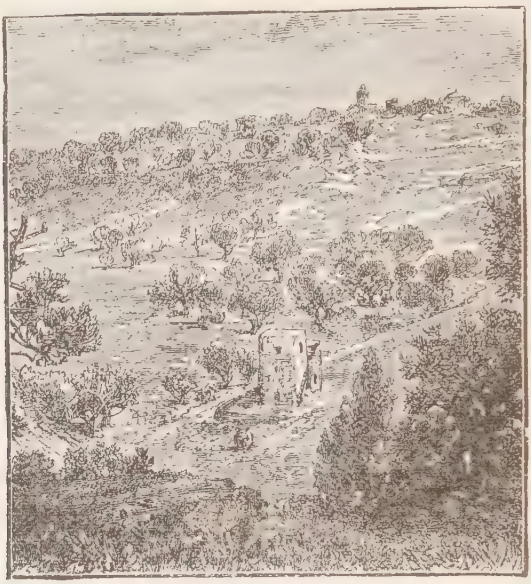
II. MEETING IN JOY.—1. *Our Resurrection Like Christ's.*—(1) Though glorified, our identity will remain. We can still say, "It is I, myself." (2) In the resurrection our nature will be full of peace. Jesus Christ would not have said, "Peace be unto you," if there had not been deep peace within himself. We shall never again be tossed about with troubles, and sorrow, and distress, and persecution. (3) Our nature will find its home amid the communion of saints. The Lord's first evening was spent in the room where his disciples were gathered. (4) Our bodies will admirably serve our spirits. His flesh and bones were text and sermon for him. (5) We shall remember the past. The risen Savior speaks of the time, "While I was yet with you." It is rather a small subject, but still we shall remember all the way whereby the Lord our God led us, and shall talk to each other concerning it. (6) We shall rise full of the spirit of service. Our Lord called others to go out and preach the gospel, and gave them the Spirit of God to help them. We shall find part of our bliss and joy in serving him who raised us from the dead (*Spurgeon*).

2. *Opening the Mind.*—Not that we may be wise above what is written, but that we may be wiser in what is written, and may be made wise to salvation by it. The Spirit in the word and the Spirit in the heart say the same thing. Christ's scholars never learn above their Bibles, but they need to be learning still more and more out of their Bibles (*Henry*). When you answer the letter of a dear friend, do you say that love alone should dictate what you say and what information you give? I think you take your friend's letter and look it over carefully lest something be forgotten which was especially desired. Our Father's letter is before us that we may understand his wishes and that we may not forget.

3. *Ye Are Witnesses.*—Scott, in one of his poems, refers to the custom of ancient Scotland of assembling their clans by means of the fiery cross. A light cross of wood was charred at the point, and the flames quenched in the blood of a goat. This was sent around to the villages and homes of the clan, each one sending it on to his neighbor, with only the name of the meeting-place. And every one was bound under fearful anathemas to obey the sign.

> When flits this cross from man to man, Burst be the ear that fails to heed,
> Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan, Palsied the foot that shuns to speed.

So is Christ's cross, scorched with his sufferings, stained with his blood, the summons to every disciple to go forth and preach the gospel (*Peloubet*).



REPUTED PLACE OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

III. A PARTING IN HOPE.—1. *Disciples' Joy.*—How strong the conviction must have been which brought the disciples back from the last parting with their beloved Master; not in sadness, but in great joy. Had such an event as the resurrection been related in the gospels, and yet the apostles had lived on as under the blighting and desolating shadow of the cross, the disappointed disciples of a Master slain in disgrace and hopelessly dead, we should be constrained to account the narrative an allegory, or a fiction. But when we find the life-pulse of the risen Saviour throbbing through the Roman Empire almost simultaneously with the tidings of his death; when we see his bereaved followers gladdened, inspired, empowered, as they never had been while he whom they had so dearly loved was with them; when we hear them proclaiming him alive—and believed in by thousands in the very city without whose gates he had died—we then turn to the gospels and have the mystery of their confident, jubilant faith made clear. We believe not because it is so written, but because had it not been, the history of the church had been unwritten (*Peabody*).

2. *Continually in the Temple.*—

"Not o'er the grave side bending,
Not o'er the distant sea,
Not to the sky ascending,
Dear Lord we search for thee;
But in thy word of wisdom,
Thy word of love and cheer,
Thy word of Calvary telling,
Dear Lord, we find thee here."

CONNECTIONS.

SUFFERING TEACHING REPENTANCE
SALVATION TURNING REMISSION

GOLDEN TEXT.

Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.
—Luke xxiv. 47.

LESSON XIII. JUNE 28.

REVIEW.

The time covered by these lessons reaches from November to December, A. D. 29, to May, A. D. 30. Some of the events occurred during the last journey from Galilee; some during a sojourn in Perea; the last scenes are at Jerusalem.

We know him not fully or truly until we know him as our *Prophet*, giving to us the words of eternal wisdom; as our *Priest*, who paid the ransom of our souls; and as our *King*, ruling over and in us. He speaks to us to-day as really as he did to his chosen twelve in the cities and on the plains of Judæa; he intercedes for us to-day as truly as he did for his troubled flock in the over-clouded feast chamber; he guides our steps as really now as he guided the steps of Peter, James, and John, when he walked with them day by day. Taught by him, the unlearned became wise; redeemed by him, the unholy become blameless; ruled by him the slave of sin becomes the freeman of the Lord, and has the right of citizenship in the kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Men still think as did the old Jews, that this king is unreal, and his kingdom a dream. But there is no peace or joy for earth till men do find him, and know the reality of his kingdom (*H. B. Smith*).

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

I. W. A. S. (Luke xiii. 22-30).—How many does Jesus say will be saved? Who will not be able to enter the narrow door? Why does Jesus say the Jewish Pharisee will lament and rage?

II. P. of G. S. (Luke xiv. 15-24).—How did those who were first bidden to a great feast treat their invitation? Who finally did attend the feast? What does this parable represent?

III. The L. F. (Luke xv. 11-24).—Why did the younger son leave his father? Why did he come back? What did he lose by his prodigal life? What did he not lose?

IV. The R. M. and L. (Luke xvi. 19-31).—Why was "a certain rich man" lost? What do you think was the "flame" which gave him anguish? Did Abraham send Lazarus back to earth? Why not?

V. F. (Luke xvii. 5-19).—What is meant by "faith as a grain of mustard seed"? Can we do more than our duty? Why? Why was Jesus disappointed?

VI. L. on P. (Luke xviii. 9-17).—What was the fault with the Pharisee's prayer? Was it a prayer at all? What was commendable in the publican's prayer? Can little children enter the kingdom of heaven? Who can not enter?

VII. P. of the P. (Luke xix. 11-27).—What mistake did certain citizens make concerning a king who was to rule over them? Why were two good servants differently rewarded? What happened to the unprofitable servant?

VIII. T. J. in the T. (Luke xx. 9-19).—How did the tenants of a certain vineyard abuse their rights and privileges? Why did they propose to kill the proprietor's son? Did it profit them? Did it profit the Jews to kill Jesus?

IX. D. of J. F. (Luke xxi. 20-36).—When did Jesus say the destruction of Jerusalem would be at hand? Did the Jewish Christians profit by this warning? Were Christ's words fulfilled? When? Do we yet look for a greater coming? (Acts i. 11; I. Thess. iv. 16, 17; II. Peter iii. 10.)

X. W. to the D. (Luke xxii. 24-37).—Who are the greatest men in the world? Who can be spared out of the world best? What shall be the reward of those who live near Christ here? What mistake did Peter make as to what he could endure?

XI. J. C. (Luke xxiii. 33-46).—What was the first saying of Jesus on the cross? Who mocked him, and why? What prayer did one of the crucified thieves make? Was it answered? How long did Jesus hang dying upon the cross?

XII. The R. L. (Luke xxiv. 36-53).—How did the apostles feel when together they first saw Jesus after his resurrection? Of what did he seek to assure them? What does he say the Christ should do? Why? Where was the preaching of his kingdom to begin? When was it to begin? Where and how did Jesus finally leave his followers?

ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS.

CANAAN
as expanded from time of
JOSHUA
—BY—
DAVID'S CONQUESTS.
OLD TESTAMENT
BIBLE LANDS
GREAT SEA
ARABIA
Scale of Miles
Berea
Tiphsa
Rezpeh
Hamath
ARAM
OR
SYRIA
Tadmor
Tripolis
Baalbek
Sidon
DAMASCUS
Hazor
Salcah
ISRAEL
Joppa
JERUSALEM
JUDAH
Bered
Elath
Scopus
JERUSALEM
Bethany
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Longitude
Greenwich

STANDARD BIBLE LESSONS.

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PREPARED BY E. B. WAKEFIELD.
GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES BY J. W. McGARVEY.

July, Aug., Sept., 1896.

THIRD QUARTER.—STUDIES IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

LESSON I. JULY 5.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice.
—Psa. xcvii. 1.

DAVID, KING OF JUDAH.

II. Samuel ii. 1-11.

Time.—B. C. 1055. **Places.**—Ziklag, and Hebron.

Geographical Notes.—When the death of King Saul occurred, as described in the previous chapter, David's home was at Ziklag, a town on the border of the Philistine plain, which had been given to him and his six hundred men by Achish, king of Gath (i. 1, 2; I. Sam. xxvii. 1-6). This town was but a few miles from Hebron, and in a northwesterly direction. A single short day's march brought him to the latter city when the Lord told him to go up thither. Hebron will be remembered as the home of Abraham, and, after the settlement of the twelve tribes in Canaan, as the chief city of the tribe of Judah. It still held this position; for Jerusalem, which alone superseded it in prominence and fame, had not yet been rescued from the hands of the Jebusites. Jabesh Gilead, to whose warriors David sent a complimentary message because they had buried Saul and his sons, was situated in the highlands east of the Jordan, in the mountains of Gilead, and the territory of Gad. These men, when they heard that the body of Saul and those of his sons had been gibbeted on the walls of Bethshan, had come down from the mountains to the Jordan, crossed the river by night in the very face of the triumphant Philistines, taken the bodies down, carried them to their own city, and after burning them so that the Philistines if they pursued could not gibbet them again, buried the bones. This was done at the imminent risk of their lives, and it excited both the admiration and gratitude of David. He was anxious to secure as his subjects men of such valor. Mahanaim, where Abner proclaimed Ishbosheth as Saul's successor, was close in the vicinity of Jabesh Gilead, being also located in Gilead. The love of Saul manifested by the people of that city was doubtless shared by the people of the whole district, and this made it a good place in which to set up the throne of Saul's son. Moreover, the whole of the country west of the Jordan, except Judah, was now under the control of the Philistines, while they seem not to have crossed to the east bank of the river. The two rivals to the throne were thus located, each in the community most devoted to him; for while the men of Gilead loved Saul, the people of Judah loved David, both because he was of their tribe, and because he had fought many little battles in protecting them from petty foes on their borders.

Introductory.—We take up in this quarter the study of Old Testament history where it was left off six months ago. The second book of Samuel, in which the lessons of the quarter are mainly found, is essentially the history of David's reign.

The Character of Saul.—The lesson begins with events immediately succeeding the death of Saul. The first king of Israel had many commanding qualities. He was brave and soldier-like; he was patriotic, and unmistakably religious; and yet he terribly failed, because in decisive moments *he could not*

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, June 29.—Doeg, the Edomite (I. Sam. xxii. 9-23).
Tuesday, June 30.—Jonathan Meets David (I. Sam. xxiii. 14-29).
Wednesday, July 1.—David Spares Saul (I. Sam. xxiv. 1-17).
Thursday, July 2.—Saul Again Spared (I. Sam. xxvi. 1-18).
Friday, July 3.—David Takes Shelter with the Philistines (I. Sam. xxvii. 1-12).
Saturday, July 4.—Death of Saul and Jonathan (I. Sam. xxxi. 1-13).
Sunday, July 5.—David King of Judah (II. Sam. ii. 1-11).

consent to bend his own will to the will of God. His jealousy of the "stripling David" led him to acts of perfidy and gross cruelty. At last, brave and resolute even in despair, he dies in dreadful defeat at Mount Gilboa; and with him perishes his son Jonathan, one of the most generous and beautiful characters in all history.

1 And it came to pass after this, that Dā'vid enquired (inquired) of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Jū'dah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And Dā'vid said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hē'bron.

2 So Dā'vid went up thither, and his two wives also, A-hĭn'o-am the Jĕz're-el-ī-tess, and A'bĭ-gāil (Nabal's wife, the wife of Nabal) the Cär'mel-īte.

3 And his men that were (were) with him did Dā'vid bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hē'bron.

I. FROM EXILE TO A KINGDOM.

EXPLANATORY.

1. It came to pass after this.—In the victorious campaign which the Philistines had just made against Israel, David had not been asked to bear a part; although on account of Saul's deadly enmity, he was living in alliance with the Philistines and under their protection. The lords of Philistia feared when it came to battle David would prove their adversary. The death of Saul and Jonathan, news of which were speedily borne to him, called forth a deep lament, and changed the conditions of his life. **David inquired of the Lord.**—In this day of terrible disaster, when the northern tribes were overwhelmed, and only Judah on the south, and the region east of the Jordan were unconquered, David's heart turned to his own country. But he was entangled with obligations to the Philistines, which never should have been, and consequently was somewhat distrusted by his countrymen. As was common with him in the emergencies of life, he sought to know the will of God. Abiathar, alone left of the sons of Abimelech, the priest, whom Saul had slaughtered, was with David, and through him Divine guidance could legitimately be sought. **Shall I go up?**—The first question was whether he should go at all. When this was decided, the next question arose. **Whither shall I go?**—He put himself under God's guidance, and could not go wrong. **Unto Hebron.**—The best of places if he were to grow into kingly power. It had been the home of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and here they were buried. Situated in the mountains of Judah, it was a commanding position, and well located for defence.

2. So David went up thither.—He moved for permanence. His first wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, had been taken from him by her father and given to another, and David had begun that course of polygamous marriage which was to result so disastrously to the peace and prosperity of his reign.

3, 4. His men that were with him did David bring up.—David had a band of six hundred trained men, many of them greatly distinguished for their prowess, and all devotedly attached to him. Many of them had families of their own, and they also had numerous flocks and herds which they had taken from the Amalekites; so that it was necessary to distribute them in the villages lying around Hebron. The peaceful and favored occupancy of this region by such a force, introduced David at once to an estate of supremacy and power. **And there they anointed David king.**—Large numbers came from other tribes, and offered their services to David; but it was only his own tribe of Judah which at first established and supported his throne. The rule of Saul had made the people accustomed to royalty; and David's commanding powers, together with the fact that he had been set apart by the prophet Samuel many years before to the kingly office, made it easy and natural for his own tribesmen, even though they acted independently and alone, to make him their king.

4 And the men of Jū'dah came, and there they anointed Dā'vid king over the house of Jū'dah. And they told Dā'vid, saying, That the men of Jā'besh-gĭl'e-ăd were they that buried Saul.

5 And Dā'vid sent messengers unto the men of Jā'besh-gĭl'-e-ăd, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Jū'dah have anointed me king over them.

8 But Ab'ner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bō'sheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mā-ha-nā'im;

II. ENDURING LOYALTY COMMENDED.

The men of Jabesh Gilead were they that buried Saul.—The people of Jabesh had reason to remember Saul with gratitude. When he was first chosen king, Nahash, King of Ammon, was besieging Jabesh, and had decreed that if relief did not come to the city in seven days he would put out the right eyes of all the inhabitants as a mark of contempt for Israel. Saul, with determined effort, aroused Israel and met the Ammonites with a force that drove them from Jabesh, and broke their power for many years. At the close of the battle on the slope of Gilboa, when the better arms and better discipline of the Philistines prevailed, Saul and three of his sons, and his entire body-guard, lay dead. The next day the Philistines stripped the bodies, sending the head of Saul to Philistia, and afterwards nailing his body and those of his sons to the walls of Bethshean. The country around Bethshean was wholly in the hands of the Philistines, but the men of Jabesh Gilead, remembering the service Saul had done them twenty years before, made a night march to Bethshean, fifteen miles away; and taking down the bodies bore then across the Jordan to their own city, where to hide their mutilation the bodies were burned, and the bones were buried with honor and lamentation.

5–7. David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh Gilead.—This was David's first act as king. It was an appropriate and graceful act. Men knew he had reason to be alienated from Saul, yet he takes every occasion to show himself loyal to his memory. Of his friendship for Jonathan no one could doubt. He praises the men who honored themselves and their king by prompt and brave fidelity; he invokes blessings upon them, and urges them to cultivate and maintain a valor which is so important to a people. To give weight to his words he speaks officially, and tells of his elevation to the throne by the tribe of Judah.

III. A KINGDOM BEYOND THE RIVER.

8. Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host.—Abner the cousin of Saul, and under him the commander of his army, had escaped with a remnant of his forces, after the ill-fated battle of Gilboa, to the east of the Jordan. As the Philistines did not push their conquest beyond the river, he was left in supreme control of that region. **Had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul.**—Abner seems to have been true to the duties of his position. He was loyal to the family of Saul, and doubtless respected the wishes of the people. The tragic death of the king would endear his family to the nation; and David by his untimely connection with the Philistines, had

9 And he made him king over Gĭl'e-ăd, and over the Ash'ŭr-ites, and over Jĕz-re'el, and over E'phrā-im, and over Bĕn'ja-min, and over all Is'ra-el.

10 Ish-bo'sheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over (Ish-bo'sheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Is'ra-el, and reigned two years. Is'ra-el, and he reigned two years,) But the house of Jū'dah followed Dā'vid.

11 And the time that Dā'vid was king in Hē'bron over the house of Jū'dah was seven years and six months.

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missed an opportunity to strike blows that might have changed the face of affairs, and had estranged the hearts of many of the leaders. Ishbosheth literally signifies "man of shame." Originally his name was Eshbaal, that is, "Man of Baal." At first Baal was not the name of any particular heathen deity, but had the general significance of lord, master, husband. When at a later day Ahab undertook to introduce the worship of the Phœnician Baal, the term became one of reproach and abhorrence. Ishbosheth was the youngest of Saul's four sons; the others had perished in the battle with their father, and he was left the heir and successor. **And had brought him over to Mahanaim.**—This city lay within the territory of Gad, and not far from the brook Jabbok. Its exact location is not now known.

9. And he made him king over Gilead.—Naturally Ishbosheth would first have undisturbed sway over Gilead, the territory east of the Jordan. The reference to the Ashurites (the extreme northwest tribe of Israel, probably), and to the little town of Jezreel, which lay beyond Gilboa, would indicate that Abner had acquired strength and gradually pushed back the Philistines, recovering considerable territory to that kingdom of which he was virtually ruler. **Over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.**—Ephraim, always jealous of Judah, would naturally cast her fortunes with the other tribes, and sentiment, or necessity, drew all the rest. So early were Judah and Israel divided kingdoms. But Judah was compact and united, and ruled by one who was every inch a king; and Israel was still somewhat broken, and nominally ruled by one who showed no kingly qualities, and only proved able to irritate and disaffect the commander who both gave him his place, and wholly overshadowed him.

10. Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign.—We are of opinion that Abner was five years in regaining and uniting the northern tribes of Israel, and that the reign of Ishbosheth is reckoned from the conclusion of this period. He might have been recognized as king east of the Jordan during all these years; but he only is recorded as king for two years, while David at Hebron ruled over Judah alone for seven years and six months.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The House of David. 1–4. What did David inquire of the Lord? What event called for his return to his native land? What was God's command? What further direction did he seek? What was the answer? Who were David's wives? Whom else did he take with him? Where did they dwell? How did the men of Judah receive David? What message was brought to him? **2. Worthy Subjects.** 5–7. To whom did David send messengers? Why does he invoke blessing upon them? What does he wish the Lord to show them? What does he add for himself? How does he exhort them? What does he announce? **3. The House of Saul.** 8–11. Who was Abner? What step did he take? How old was Ishbosheth? How long did he reign? What part of the nation adhered to him? What was the exception? How long did David reign in Hebron?

COLLECT.

O God and Guide of David, be our God and Guide. May we behold that thou dost lead thy chosen servants through paths of trial and sore denial, that thou mayest prepare them for a more abundant kingdom. May we behold that the hand that once guided in the affairs of men, still guides; and may that hand lead us, and use us for blessed purpose on earth, and grateful praise in heaven. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. BY THE GRACE OF GOD, KING.—1. *Waiting for God's Guidance.*—David well knew that the throne was to be his, yet even now that it is vacant he takes no rash step, but seeks God's approval. "He that believeth does not make haste, but waits God's time for the accomplishment of God's purposes" (*Henry*).

"I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace;
I stand amid the eternal ways
And what is mine shall know my face."

2. *Trusting in God's Power.*—"Look at the motto engraved upon nearly all coins of the United States, 'In God We Trust,' and see in that the one greatest element of David's success." William Rufus, having seen the coast of Ireland from some rocks in North Wales, said: "I will summon hither all the ships of my realm, and with them make a bridge to attack that country." This threatening being reported to Murchard, Prince of Leinster, he paused a moment, and then said: "Did the king add to this mighty threat, 'if God please'?" On being assured he made no mention of God in his speech, he replied: "Sure that man puts his trust in human, not in divine power, I fear not his coming" (*Buck*).

3. *Faithfulness Rewarded.*—The companions who have been with David through the long years of his exile he brings with him and finds them homes near his own royal dwelling place. So those who suffer with Christ shall be with him in his kingdom.

4. *Honoring and Honored.*—One tribe alone acknowledged God's appointment, and completed the anointing of years before, by a second one which made the exile king of Judah. Look for a moment along the coming years. See Israel degraded, captive, lost; Judah forever glorified, forever blessing the world, aye ruling the nations in the mighty Prince of the House of David. *Them that honor me I will honor.*

II. A ROYAL MESSAGE.—1. *Its Lessons.*—(1) We should cherish no enmity against those whom circumstance or their own disposition places in opposition to us. (2) Still more fitting is it that we forget all evil of one upon whom death has set his seal. He has passed out of the reach of human revenge. We can but treat with respect the mortal remains and the memory of him whose spirit is in the presence of his Maker, and ours. (3) We owe it to ourselves and to God to honor those who are in rightful authority. David always respected the person of Saul as having been by divine appointment king, and now commends those who gave him the last possible earthly honor.

2. *A Practical Blessing.*—David makes an important addition to his words of blessing "I also will requite you." It is often the test of our interest and sincerity, whether we will do something in harmony with our words. A gentleman was expressing his feeling over a case of extreme destitution. "I pity them five dollars worth," said a listener. "How much do you?" "That was a grand sermon," said one of Christmas Evans' hearers, at a place where he had received less than his expenses. "I hope the Lord will reward you at the last day." "But what shall I do until that time," he answered, "and the old horse that carries me, what reward will she ever have?" "The Lord shew kindness to you," is good so far as it goes, but we must not forget that God works through men, through us.

3. *The New King.*—Loyalty to the dead should not stand in the way of loyalty to the living, either by passive indifference, or active opposition. I have known a mother to exclaim at the grave of a daughter, "I have nothing to live for now," forgetting the devoted husband, and the living child with all his future possibilities. I have seen the life of one who has taken a mother's place made unhappy by hostile ingratitude. This is not true loyalty to the one who is gone, but selfishness.

III. A RIVAL KING.—1. *A Foreshadowing.*—As against the kingdom of the Messiah in after days the rulers took counsel together, so against the new kingdom of David. Abner, the mighty man of Saul's house, sought to re-establish the power of his master's family.

HEBRON.

2. *Fatal Ambition.*—It is not safe to seek anything for ourselves in a way which God does not sanction. It is safest not to seek *anything* for *ourself*, yet we may rightly win position and power for God's glory, if he so lead us. Abner's attachment to his royal relations, and desire to retain his place of power, placed him in opposition to God's purpose and led, indirectly but surely, to his premature death.

3. *But the House of Judah Followed David.*—It might be added, with great truth, they followed God. When Antigonus was ready to engage in a sea fight with Ptolemy's armada, and the pilot cried out, "How many are they, more than we!" the king replied, "'Tis true, if you count their numbers, they surpass us; but for how many do you value me?" Our God is sufficient against all the combined forces of earth and hell (*Spencer*).

4. *The True King.*—Some think that it was in connection with his coronation that David composed the One Hundred and First Psalm, of which Dean Stanley thus speaks: "It is full of a stern exclusiveness, of a noble intolerance; but not against theological error, not against uncourtly manners, but against the proud heart, the high look, the secret slanderer, the deceitful worker, the teller of lies. These are the outlaws from King David's court; these alone are the rebels and heretics that he would not suffer to dwell in his house or tarry in his sight."

The Earlier Life of David.—The hardships which overtook David's earlier life were severely sad. As a ruddy shepherd boy he had triumphed over Goliath in virtue of the very simplicity and purity of his faith and his life. He bore his honors modestly. He never sought the kingdom from Saul, nor plotted in the least against him. But his very excellence made Saul his bitter enemy. He was hunted as a wild beast, and for seven years, attended by a band largely of outlaws, he lived a precarious life in the wilds of deserts. At length, in sheer despair of finding any place of peace or safety, he joined himself to his ancient enemy, the Philistines, and at the opening of this lesson is dwelling with them. In studying the earlier and later life of David we shall find him far from perfect. He committed gross sins. But one thing redeemed him—he knew how to repent thoroughly. His better nature always seemed ready to be touched; and when his true heart asserted itself, he came to the right.

THE REFUGEE REJECTED IS KING IN HEBRON HEAVEN

GOLDEN TEXT.
David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.
—II. Sam. v. 10.

LESSON II. JULY 12.

DAVID, KING OVER ALL ISRAEL.

II. Samuel v. 1-12.

Time.—About B. C. 1048. **Place.**—Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—As Hebron was near the southern extremity of the land of Israel, it was badly located for the capital of the kingdom; and the fact that it was the chief city of the tribe of Judah, against which the other tribes had been so recently at war, was calculated to excite tribal jealousy if it remained the residence of the king; so it was wise in David to seek another location. Jerusalem was only twenty miles farther north, but this made some difference in its favor, while the principal consideration in selecting it was the impregnable character of its fortifications. The city was then limited to Mt. Zion, which was an isolated hill, surrounded everywhere by a deep valley except at the northwest, where a narrow saddle connected with higher ground at a little distance. Well fortified at this point, and manned by a strong force within, it was well nigh impregnable. The Jebusites had held it now, in the midst of the surrounding Israelites, for nearly four hundred years; and so confident were they in its strength, that when David appeared before it with his army, they twitted him with the intimation that the blind and the lame inside could prevent him from taking it. They had not reckoned properly on the dashing intrepidity of the men who had become heroes under David's command. The military skill which led to this choice for the permanent seat of government, is seen in the fact that ever afterwards, when Jerusalem was bravely defended, it was not taken except by a siege which starved its defenders into surrender.

Intervening History.—Strife Between Two Kingdoms.—The desire of Abner to extend the dominion of his vassal king probably led to the battle of Gibeon, not far from the northern boundary of Judah, where the seasoned troops of David won an easy victory. The most important event of the battle was the killing by Abner, in self-defense, of Asahel, the younger brother of Joab, who was a cousin of David, and the commander of his forces. A lingering strife ensued, in which we may believe David, as far as possible, restrained from acts of violence.

Defection and Death of Abner.—The commander of the army of Ishbosheth soon saw he could make no headway, and that the power of David was destined to extend. Moreover the feebleness of his nominal king made proper hope or patriotic ardor impossible, and he made proposals to David to turn the government of Israel entirely over to his hands. While in process of carrying out their plan, or plot, he was treacherously assassinated by Joab, who was jealous of a great rival in the reunited kingdom, but who justified his murder on the ground that Abner in battle had killed his brother. David deplored the murder, but the temper of the people, and the power of Joab, were doubtless such that he could inflict no proper punishment.

Death of Ishbosheth.—When his prop was gone, the downfall of the king, who was weak rather than wicked, was easy to foresee; but his assassination by two of his bodyguard, ostensibly in revenge for injuries that had been inflicted by Saul, was cruel in the extreme. The miscreants had the effrontery to carry the head of the unfortunate king to David, as though he would rejoice at such a taking off of a rival! But David was horrified, and ordering the murderers slain, buried the head of the unfortunate king beside the body of his great captain.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, July 6.—War Between Judah and Israel (II. Sam. ii. 12-32).
Tuesday, July 7.—Abner Conspires to Unite Israel to David (II. Sam. iii. 1-16).
Wednesday, July 8.—Joab a Cruel Assassin (II. Sam. iii. 7-39).
Thursday, July 9.—The Murder of Ishbosheth (II. Sam. iv. 1-12).
Friday, July 10.—David King Over Israel (II. Sam. v. 1-12).
Saturday, July 11.—God's Purpose in David (Ps. lxxxix. 19-37).
Sunday, July 12.—A Psalm from Hebron (Ps. xxvii. 1-14).

1 Then came all the tribes of Is'ra-el to Dā'-vid unto Hē'bron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 Also in In time past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Is'ra-el: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Is'ra-el, and thou shalt be a captain prince over Is'ra-el.

3 So all the elders of Is'ra-el came to the king to Hē'bron; and king Dā'vid made a league covenant with them in Hē'bron before the LORD: and they anointed Dā'vid king over Is'ra-el.

4 Dā'vid was was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

5 In Hē'bron he reigned over Jū'dah seven years and six months: and in Je-ru'sa-lĕm he reigned thirty and three years over all Is'ra-el and Jū'dah.

I. A CROWN WELL WON.

EXPLANATORY.

1. Then came all the tribes of Israel.—At first there may have been suspicion that David had been concerned in the death of the leaders of the northern kingdom, but when his true disposition was known the hearts of all the people turned toward him. Many still felt oppression, and all felt uncertainty; and David had proven himself a ruler strong and just, and worthy of the name. The gathering was popular and vast; according to the account in I. Chron. xii., over three hundred and thirty thousand were present; nor need this number surprise us, for the distances to travel were not great, and in that climate food and lodging were easily carried. **Unto Hebron.**—It was fitting that the company should gather here, for this was the ancestral home of the nation, and here the fathers were buried. **We are thy bone and thy flesh.**—This is the first reason they assign for the choice of David as king. The tribes were all of one family, and it was wrong for them to be divided and at strife.

2. Also in time past, when Saul was king.—Here is the *second* reason for the choice of David. Even under Saul he had been the hero whose leadership was most effective and whose victories had been most decisive. His *relationship* to the people, and his *tried and proved abilities* fitted him to be king. **And the Lord said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people.**—This is the third point. He had been chosen and set apart of God as leader and ruler. They understood and accepted at last the appointment that Samuel had made. He was a divinely chosen shepherd, and a prince or leader in peace or war. So is Christ our prince and shepherd. 1. He is of our humanity, our brother in the flesh. 2. He has been well tried, and has proven his fitness to rule. In the strifes of society he will more and more prove the only teacher and leader who can give peace and hope to the world. 3. He is the chosen of God, and is appointed of heaven to be a king and Saviour. As there was long delay between the anointing of David and his coming to his throne, so with Christ. But he is King, and his dominion shall mightily extend.

3. So all the elders of Israel came.—These were the heads and representatives of the tribes. **And King David made a covenant with them.**—Something of the nature of a constitution was agreed upon. The kingdom of Israel was never an absolute monarchy. The law of Moses was to be executed, and individual and tribal rights respected. They ratified the covenant solemnly, as before God. **And they anointed David king.**—The bestowal of gifts and powers was symbolized by the pouring of fragrant and precious ointments upon the head. It was here the formal act of inauguration.

4, 5. David was thirty years old when he began to reign.—This was his age when he began to reign over Judah. He had now ruled at Hebron for seven and a half years; and he was to reign over Israel at Jerusalem for thirty-three years.

6 And the king and his men went to Je-ru'sa-lĕm (unto, against) the Jĕb'u-sītes, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto Dā'vid, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, Dā'vid can not come in hither.

7 Nevertheless Dā'vid took the strong hold of Zī'ŏn; the same (is, is) the city of Dā'vid.

8 And Dā'vid said on that day, Whosoever (getteth up to the gutter, and) smiteth the Jĕb'u-sītes, (let him get up to the watercourse, and *smite*) the lame and the blind, (*that are*, that are) hated of Dā'vid's soul. (*he shall be chief and captain.*) Wherefore they (said, The, say, There are the) blind and the lame, (shall, he can) not come into the house.

9 (So, And) Dā'vid dwelt in the (fort, strong hold,) and called it the city of Dā'vid. And Dā'vid built round about from Mĭl'lo and inward.

The end, and the beginning, of all things will be found;
For dreams do end, and cares begin, to him who has been crowned.

II. THE KING GAINS HIS CAPITAL.

6. The king and his men went to Jerusalem.—An immediate evidence of David's kingly ability. He saw at once that Hebron was too far to one side to make a fit capital for all Israel. Nor yet must he be far from Judah, the main part of his house. He saw at once the favored situation of Jerusalem; it stood in the border of Benjamin; he must have been familiar with its strength and beauty from his boyhood. Though the Jebusites had been conquered by Joshua, and their city—Jerusalem—captured, it seems never to have been occupied by the conquerors, but to have been repeopled by its old inhabitants. The almost impregnable strength of the city from its location; the fact that Israel had been divided and weak from the earliest years; and the further fact that the place hitherto had held no special importance to the nation, caused it to be left in alien hands. To David it was a necessity; and seizing the opportune moment, he utilized the great force of experienced warriors who were gathered round him, and cemented the new nation in a great common enterprise, signalizing the beginning of his reign by a master stroke of war and statecraft. **Except thou take away the blind and the lame thou shalt not come in hither.**—So strong did the inhabitants feel in their position, that they laughed at the thought of capture. If their walls were manned even by the blind and lame, no army could get over. But these Jebusites had never met such soldiers as followed David. The place was carried by a speedy assault.

8. Let him get up to the water course.—The meaning of this is not plain. David had evidently studied Jerusalem, and made a plan for assault. Some have thought a subterranean channel, or tunnel, which led within the walls, is referred to; or it may have been some channel worn in the precipice which led to a weak point of defence. As we learn in I. Chron. xi. 6, Joab, magnificent warrior as he was, first scaled the height, and perhaps regained the place he had forfeited by his treachery to Abner. "Let him smite," said David, replying in the language of taunt, "the lame and the blind, who are such invincible defenders." The saying of the Jebusites became a proverb.

III. THE CITY REBUILT.

9. And David dwelt in the stronghold.—He removed from Hebron at once, and the city became now, and henceforth, the capital of the nation. He made his residence on the fortified summit of Zion, ever after a place of royal dwelling. **Built round about from Millo and inward.**—In the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old

CEDAR TREES.

10 And Dā'vid went on, waxed greater and grew great, and greater; for the LORD, the God of hosts was with him.

11 And Hī'ram king of Tyre sent messengers to Dā'vid, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built Dā'vid an house.

12 And Dā'vid perceived that the LORD had established him king over Is'ra-el, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Is'ra-el's sake.

Testament), "the Millo" is rendered the "citadel." It seems to have occupied a place at one of the northern angles of the walls which surrounded Zion. The assignment of properties and rebuilding of the city seem to have been chiefly committed to Joab; a difficult place, which only a man of resolution and power could fill (I. Chron. xi. 8). The wisdom of David's movements was at once apparent. His prosperity was instant and great.

10. And Hiram King of Tyre sent messengers.—Tyre lay on the coast, northwest of Palestine. It was the great commercial city of the Mediterranean. The king saw the importance of the rising kingdom and hastened to establish relations of friendship; relations which with himself, and perhaps his son of the same name, were unbroken during the long reign of David and Solomon. It is significant that carpenters and masons for the proposed building must be brought from Tyre. The long period of anarchy and oppression had made the Israelites "rude men of the field," and strangers to the finer arts of civilized life. But an era of surprising changes was right at hand. And wondrous was the affection that soon grew for Jerusalem.

My joy and grief are never more my own,
Life is entwined, and is not life alone.
"Who can tell when all is well?"
When all is well, Jerusalem with thee,
Then all in every place is well with me.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. King over Israel. 1-5. What had become of the king and chief captain of the northern kingdom? What action did all the tribes now take? What were their first words to David? What second reason did they give for coming to him? Third? What did he make with the elders? What did they then do? How old was David when he became king of Judah? How long was his entire reign? Into what two parts was this divided? **2. Victor Over Enemies.** 6-9. What stronghold did David attack? What did the Jebusites say and think? How did David succeed? What did he encourage his men to do? What proverb arose from this? **3. Mighty Under God.** 10-12. What did David do with the conquered city? How did David prosper? Who was with him? Who sent messengers? What else did he send? For what purpose? What did David perceive? For whose sake was the kingdom exalted?

COLLECT.

Our heavenly Father, help us to see how thou hast used thy servants, in all the past, to accomplish glorious purposes. So use us, we pray thee, even now. But may all our service, be it watching on a lonely spot, or sharp conflict on some dangerous front, make us meet: for higher service and joy with thee forever. In Christ. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A UNITED NATION.—1. We should seize every opportunity for doing good which wrong doing has made, for bringing good out of evil. There have been many wrongs along the path by which David has come to the throne of the united nation, but while he always shows his regret and horror at these things, he pauses only to make such restitution as lies in his power, and goes on through even the gaps of crime to the fulfillment of God's purposes.

2. *A Wise Acknowledgment.*—The people in their uncertainty, left as they are without a suitable leader, gather to their divinely appointed ruler, and accept him under God. Father Hyacinthe, in a sermon, gave this explanation of Prussia's triumph over Austria in battle: "It is because the nation is more enlightened, more religious, and because every Prussian soldier has the Bible in his knapsack. I have been twice in England, and have learned that the Bible is the strength of that nation." God is at all times our refuge and strength.

3. *The Nation's Joy.*—The joy was universal, for the fame of David was again on all lips. The homage and fidelity to a new monarch, shown in modern nations on the part of public servants by taking the oath, have been expressed in the east, from the earliest ages by gifts presented by the population at large to their new ruler. Such offerings, in the simple forms alone possible in a rustic community like Israel, now poured in from every part (I. Chron. xii. 40). The narrative reminds us of the exciting scenes of early Teutonic history, when the freemen, under the leadership of their dukes and chiefs, gathered on the plains of the Rhine, and chose as king, through their representatives, the hero they trusted and admired (*Geikie*).

II. A RASH DEFIANCE.—1. *The Stronghold.*—Visible as it was from the heights of his native Bethlehem, it must have been perfectly familiar to him, and perhaps the conquest of it had been one of the fondest aspirations of his youth (*Taylor*).

> The inhabitants of old Jerusalem
> Were Jebusites; and theirs the native right—
> But when the chosen people grew more strong,
> The rightful cause at length became the wrong (*Dryden*).

2. *Over-confidence.*—Their boastful security brought more certain disaster upon them. Quebec sleeping in the security of its strong natural defences, woke to find Wolfe's army drawn up on the plain beside them, having scaled the unguarded precipice. A ship was coming to port, and the captain determined to enter by a narrow and dangerous channel instead of a safer one, though a storm was rising. He laughed at the fears of the passengers, and swore he would do as he pleased. The gale increased, and in the darkness rose the cry, "Breakers ahead!" The vessel plunged, and struck, to be shattered at the wild waves' pleasure, and among the dead thrown up by the rising tide was the body of the presumptuous captain. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety, and rashly to incur danger or temptation is criminal.

3. *God's Purpose Can Not Be Stayed.*—As you stood some stormy day upon a sea cliff, and marked the giant billow rise from the deep to rush on with foaming crest, and throw itself thundering on the trembling shore, did you ever fancy that you could stay it in its course, and hurl it back to the depths of ocean? Did you ever stand beneath the leaden lowering cloud, and mark the lightning's leap, as it shot and flashed, dazzling athwart the gloom, and think that you could grasp the bolt, and change its path? Still more foolish and vain his thought who fancies that he can arrest or turn aside the purpose of God (*Guthrie*).

4. *God's People Triumph.*—At a time of sudden need during the war in India, an order for action was sent to a corps, the men of which were so many of them intoxicated that they were unfit for duty. "Then," said the general, when told that his former order was unavailing, "call out Havelock's saints; they are never drunk, and Havelock is always ready." They were immediately under arms, and the enemy were repulsed (*Hannah More*).

III. AN ESTABLISHED POWER.—1. *The Strength Which Had Opposed Him Was Now for Him.*—A strong nature is well worth conquering for Christ, for one who can oppose most

formidably can help most efficiently. We may also make another application to our own natures. The sin which stands in our way will be a source of strength to us in our overcoming it. It is the advantage of the existence of evil that it may develop by calling forth resistance.

2. *Help from the Stranger.*—David's house was never the worse nor less fit to be dedicated to God for its being built by the sons of the stranger; it is prophecied of the gospel church, the sons of strangers shall build up the wall and their kings shall minister unto thee (Isa. lx. 10) (*Henry*). Voluntarily or involuntarily, science, art, even the opposers of Christianity, have helped in its firmer establishment. It is said that a haughty, impious man built a mansion from which the Redeemer was purposely excluded. A poor, but pious, woman called one day and asked a small contribution to aid a religious work in which she was engaged. He defied her and her Master. She told him that his lordly estate would be used some day to train holy men for the ministry of that Saviour whom he despised. That costly mansion is now occupied by the Drew Theological Seminary (*Foster*).

3. *After Many Days.*—When God has some great work for a man to do he prepares him for it by the discipline of his providence. Not all at once did David pass from the shepherd life of Bethlehem to the throne of Jerusalem. . . . It is not different yet. Success is not usually a sudden thing, or if it be so it is not a wholesome thing. . . . Courage then, though everything seem to be against you, hold on; for if you only be sure that God is for you—and he will be for you if you will be for him—you will at length attain to the throne, for which he has designed you, and the crown for which he has anointed you (*Taylor*).

DESIRED
ANOINTED
VICTORIOUS
IMPERFECT
DEVOTED

TOWER OF DAVID.

GOLDEN TEXT.
O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.
—Ps. lxxxiv. 12.

LESSON III. JULY 19.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM.

II. Samuel vi. 1-12.

Time.—B. C. 1042. **Places.**—Jerusalem and Keriath-jearim.

Connecting History.—Battle with the Philistines.—While David had remained king of the little principality of Judah, the Philistines seem to have ignored him, and left him in peace. But when he became king of united Israel, and showed masterly vigor by the capture of Jerusalem, they saw that a foe had arisen who must crush or be crushed. Gathering their well ordered and victorious army, they hurried toward Jerusalem. They came under the very walls, in the valley that lay toward Bethlehem; until David, watching his opportunity, made a sudden and vehement attack, breaking their lines, and driving them from the field in utter confusion. The Philistines had brought their idols with them, and these were captured and burned. Again, by the same route, the Philistines advanced, undoubtedly making a supreme effort with their entire military resources. But David had also strengthened his army; and leaving a sufficient body to guard Jerusalem, he led his forces around the Philistine hosts and struck them unexpectedly in the rear. The result was a crushing defeat from which the Philistines never recovered. Other conflicts yet took place, but the battles of Pirazim and Gibeon forever ended Israel's tribute to Philistia.

ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Story of the Ark.—The sacred Ark had been absent from its place in the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle for about seventy years. Taken in battle by the Philistines (I. Sam. iv. 10), it had first been placed in the Temple of Dagon at Ashdod. So disastrous did its presence prove to the temple and its inhabitants, that it was taken to Ekron, another Philistine capital. Here a plague broke out, and the people of that city, loading it with tribute and placing it upon a cart, were glad to see the free kine draw it away to the Israelite city, Beth-shemesh. Here it was welcomed, until, being opened in unholy curiosity, a plague fell upon the people, and they sent men to Keriath-jearim, asking the inhabitants of that place to come and take it away; which was reverently done. The history of the ark is typical; it was meant to teach lessons which men can not afford to be ignorant of; every holy ordinance or institution, ordained by God, will bless him who respects and honors it; it will prove a judgment upon him who neglects or despises it.

1 Again, And Dā'vid again gathered together all the the chosen men men of Is'ra-el, thirty thousand.

2 And Dā'vid arose, and went with all the people that were were with him, from Bā'ă-lē of Jū'dah, to bring up from thence the

I. THE ARK OF GOD.

EXPLANATORY.

1. David again gathered together all the chosen.—A great assemblage had gathered when David was made king. Another gathers, not so numerous, but well chosen, to greet the symbolic throne of the heavenly King. David showed quite as much care in organizing and elevating the religious life of his nation as he did the political. Indeed there was practical wisdom in this. The *unity* of Israel was the first point to be sought;

ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, even the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between sitteth upon the cherubims. cherubim.

3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of A-bĭn'a-dăb that was in Gib'e-ah: the hill: and Uz'zah and A-hī'o, the sons of A-bĭn'a-dăb, drave the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the house of A-bĭn'a-dăb, which was at Gib'e-ah, accompanying was in the hill, with the ark of God: and A-hī'o went before the ark.

5 And Dā'vid and all the house of Is'ra-el played before the LORD on with all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on and with harps, and on with psalteries. and on with timbrels, and on cornets, with castanets, and on with cymbals.

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and if the house of the Lord were established at Jerusalem, and its service made dear to the people, a powerful and enduring bond would be established.

2. David arose, and went with all the people.—This movement was made after consultation and with approval of the people. They went first to, and then from, Baale-Judah. This was the old Canaanite name of Keriath-jearim—the "city of woods." It is supposed to have been six or eight miles west of Jerusalem. **To bring up from thence the ark of God.**—What was this so-called "Ark of the Covenant"? A cabinet or box of wood, about four feet long and two and one-half wide, containing notably the tables of the law; the cover richly overlaid with gold, and surmounted by cherubim, symbolic figures, whose wings overshadowed the mercy-seat—the appointed place where man met God; and where, in proper place and service, the divine Presence shone. To this ark, comparatively plain as it was, and in the keeping of neglectful man, the name of God was affixed. It was holy because he chose to perform in connection with it acts of condescending mercy.

> Appoint some place, O God, where we may meet;
> Place unmistakable—thy mercy-seat.

3. They set the ark of God upon a new cart.—The conveyance was the best *of the kind* that they could provide. Following the example of the Philistines they proposed to convey the ark on a wheeled vehicle. But the law had expressly directed that it should be borne by priests, rings being fixed in the sides for the insertion of bearing-rods. The ark was to be kept covered, and no man was to touch it (Ex. xxv. 10-22; Num. iv. 15). It is never safe to follow the example of the world in deflecting from the express commands of Jehovah. **And brought it out of the house of Abinadab.**—At least two generations have passed since the ark was left at the house of Abinadab (I. Sam. vii. 1). Samuel has grown old and died; Saul has risen and fallen, and David has grown to manhood's prime. In Hebrew any male descendant is called a son; and Uzzah and Ahio may have been grandsons of Abinadab. One of these seems to have driven the cattle, while the other watched the ark.

5. David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord.—With music and song they would have a sacred triumphant procession. The instruments here named were used in sacred, and not military, exercises. Harps and psalteries were stringed instruments, and the trimbel was the tamborine. In the parallel passage (I. Chron. xiii. 8), trumpets are named in

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, July 13.—The Plan of the Ark (Ex. xxv. 10-23).
Tuesday, July 14.—Building the Ark (Ex. xxxvii. 1-9).
Wednesday, July 15.—The Ark Captured (I. Sam. iv. 1-11).
Thursday, July 16.—The Ark Returned (I. Sam. vi. 6-16).
Friday, July 17.—The Ark Brought to Zion (II. Sam. vi. 1-12).
Saturday, July 18.—Significance of Ark and Tabernacle (Heb. ix. 1-12).
Sunday, July 19.—Give Unto the Lord Glory (Ps. xxix. 1 11).

6 And when they came to Na'chon's the threshing-floor of Na'con, Uz'zah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. stumbled.

CART AND DRIVERS.

7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uz'zah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And Dā'vid was displeased, because the LORD had made a broken breach forth upon Uz'zah: and he called the name of that place Pē'rez-ŭz'zah, to unto this day.

9 And Dā'vid was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to unto me?

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place of castanets; the latter are pieces of wood beaten in time. Cymbals are metallic instruments, played by striking them together.

II. DESTRUCTION AND BLESSING.

6, 7. When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon.—A smooth plot of ground where grain was trodden out, perhaps worn smooth by long usage, and rutted by approaching paths. **Uzzah put forth his hand.**—"He did not think; but it was his business to think." The oxen stumbled, or quickly turned aside, so as to give the cart a lurch, and seemingly endangered the ark, and Uzzah reached forth his hand to steady it. **And the anger of the Lord was kindled.**—This is one of those expressions which the Bible student must grow to understand. Men judge of God's motives, as they do of men's, by his acts. If he changes a course of dealing, he *repents;* if his act is sudden and severe, he is *angry*. But he never changes his great plan and purpose, nor does he ever feel a blind and hasty passion. His judgments are all from holy principles, and for good. **God smote him there for his error.**—It does not follow that endless condemnation fell on Uzzah, but now it was best that he suffer that an essential lesson should be taught. Men had grown careless in regard to God's requirements, and were dealing lightly with most holy things. In this day, when his worship was being restored and enlarged, it was all important that there should be a right beginning.

It is in love thou smitest
The feet that wander from thee, or the hands
That touch in thoughtlessness thy mercy-seat.

8. And David was displeased.—Surprise, anxiety, keen disappointment, must have possessed David. His "triumphal entry" had met a sharp arrest, and his expectations were dashed. In the presence of this judgment he had reason to be displeased with the whole proceedings. He doubtless saw at once that there had been guilty ignorance and neglect. Perhaps he felt at the moment that God should have "regarded the intent of the heart, and overlooked the short coming"; yet he must have seen at once that God's holiness was symbolized in the sanctity of the ark, and heedless sacrilege was utter profanity. **Perezuzzah.**—The "breach of Uzzah," the place of the dreadful stroke.

9, 10. David was afraid of the Lord that day.—He saw that offence had been committed, and he did not know where judgment would end. He feared to remove the ark farther least another mistake should be made. The judgment at least

10 So Dā'vid would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of Dā'vid; but Dā'vid carried it aside into the house of O'bed-ē'dom the Gĭt'tīte.

11 And the ark of the LORD continued / remained in the house of O'bed-ē'dom the Gĭt'tīte three months: and the LORD blessed O'bed-ē'dom, and all his household. / house.

12 And it was told king Dā'vid, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of O'bed-ē'dom, and all that pertaineth / pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So / And Dā'vid went and brought up the ark of God from the house of O'bed-ē'dom into the city of Dā'vid with gladness. / joy.

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had this good effect, that it at once made men careful to know the will of God. He is uncertain as to how he can bring the ark safely to its sanctuary in his city; and for the time he turns aside and leaves it in the house of the nearest Levite—Obed-edom.

11, 12. The Lord blessed Obed-edom.—The ark was sure to bring blessing or cursing—as is every divine institution; and David saw from the blessings of pious Obed, that the ark of God was not to be feared of those who rightly honored it. He took pains to know the law of God (see I. Chron. xv. 2); and after a halt of three months the ark was borne with joy and holy confidence to the tabernacle which he had built to receive it upon Mount Zion. The old tabernacle of the wilderness, often repaired, and now doubtless frail, was left at Gibeon under the care of Zadoc (I. Chron. xvi. 39, 40). The new structure, patterned after the old, was in charge of Abiathar as high priest.

The outer groweth old, and the tent it doth decay,
But the fire on the altar burns freshly every day.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Careless Service. 1-5. Whom did David gather? Where did they go? For what purpose? What enemies of Israel had had possession of the ark? In whose house was it now? How did they attempt to bring the ark? What did the law direct? Who drove the cart? What did David and the others do as they went? **2. Disastrous Service.** 6-12. Why did Uzzah touch the ark? What was the consequence of his act? How did David feel about this? How did he feel with regard to the removal of the ark? Where was it taken? How long did it remain there? What effect did this have on the household of Obed-edom? What induced David to go again for the ark? What feeling did he now manifest?

COLLECT.

We thank thee, O God, for the mercy seat; for every institution and appointment that brings us to thy gracious presence. May we not trifle with that which thou hast made sacred; help us to feel how far is sinful man below Him who is infinitely holy; and may we show our reverence for thee by reverencing thy Son and his appointed service. So, honoring and venerating the places where thou hast written thy name on earth, may we be taken to adore, in the joys of thy presence, in heaven. Amen

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE ARK TO HAVE A HOME.—1. *The Translation of the Ark.*—It was to be the inauguration of a new development of the Jewish nation, a vast impulse which continued till the overthrow of the monarchy. The festival was one which corresponded exactly to what in the middle ages would have been "The Feast of the Translation" of some great relic, by which a new city or a new church was to be glorified. Long sleepless nights had David passed in thinking of it (Ps. cxxxii.)—as St. Louis of the transport of the Crown of Thorns to the Royal Chapel of Paris. Now the time had come (*Stanley*).

2. *Where Honor is Due.*—We should always deal with God's appointments and the symbols of his especial presence in a reverent manner, and at a fitting time and place. The house of Kirjath-jearim was better than Dagon's Temple, but it was not a suitable place for the symbol which represented Jehovah's presence with Israel. He had shown his power in their behalf even in its absence. Still more, therefore, should they honor it.

3. *It Is Not Safe to Follow the World, Even at Its Best.*—A thing may be commendable in another which would not be right for us. The best the Philistines could do was to place the ark upon a cart. They knew not God's commands concerning it, nor was it fitting that the priests of the idol should bear it. The Israelites knew and should have regarded even the slightest proprieties in regard to it. "As in a map of small dimensions, the prick of a pin may represent the space of a hundred miles, so in the law of God, obedience or neglect of the least commandment may involve the smile or frown of God the Judge" (*Bowes*).

4. *No Substitute for Obedience.*—Pachomius, abbot of the Monastery of Tabenna, was informed that no salads or cooked vegetables had been served on the table for a long time, though the rules required it. He sought the cook and inquired concerning the matter. "My father, so many of the monks deny themselves anything except bread, and it is so much trouble preparing the vegetables and soup, and so disappointing to see them come from the table almost untouched, that I thought I would employ my time more profitably in making mats." The abbot commanded him to show him the mats he had made, then seized a fire brand, and set them in a blaze, saying: "What! withdrawn from some of the monks the opportunity of denying themselves, from those who are sickly the necessary delicacies, and from the young their needful support, because it gives thee a little trouble, and because thou thoughtest to do better by plaiting?" To obey is better than sacrifice (*Foster*).

II. A LESSON LEARNED ON THE WAY.—1. *Dangerous Familiarity.*—We should beware lest by association with sacred things we come to regard them carelessly. A scientific gentleman was examining the scene of a fatal explosion. He was accompanied by the underviewer of the colliery, and as they were inspecting the edge of a goaf (region of foul air), it was observed that the "Davies" which they carried were "afire." "I suppose," said the inspector, "that there is a good deal of fire-damp hereabouts." "Thousands and thousands of cubic feet," cooly replied his companion. "Why," exclaimed the official, "do you mean to say that there is nothing but that shred of wire gauze between us and eternity?" "Nothing at all," said the underviewer very composedly. The precipitate retreat of the government official was instantaneous (*Trench*). The mine is safe, to be sure, as long as the bit of gauze is perfect, but if he enter the goaf with a little rent in the covering of his flame, even if he is ignorant of it, the whole mine may be blown into the air.

2. *The Lesson Needed.*—All the people were in fault. The one severe lesson was mercy to all in saving them from further disobedience. We, too, need to learn that a good intention will not justify a bad action, nor save us from its resulting evils. A young man was chained to a fellow convict, and was about to leave his native land and heart-broken mother for ever. When a child he had been allowed to have his own way. His mother scolded his master at school for punishing her headstrong boy. His career was from bad to worse. At last he was convicted of highway robbery and sentenced to penal servitude (*Bib. Mus.*).

3. *Displeased at God's Judgment.*—Must not the conduct of a parent seem very unaccountable to a child when its inclinations are thwarted; when it is obliged to swallow

bitter physic; to part with what it likes, and to suffer and do, and see many things done contrary to its own judgment? Will it not therefore follow from hence, that the little child man, when it takes upon itself to judge of parental providence—a thing of yesterday to criticize the economy of the Ancient of Days—will it not follow, I say, that such a judge of such matters must be apt to make very erroneous judgments, esteeming these things in themselves unaccountable which he can not account for, and concluding of some things from an appearance of arbitrariness suited to his infancy and ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious and absurd (*Berkley*).

4. *The Blessing Received by Another.*—David fears to bear the ark into the city. There are those who fear to say, thy will be done, as though God will make some mistake if we will let him plan for us. Obed-edom meanwhile receives it, and accepting the risk gains also the blessing. Josephus says that from being a poor man, his estate increased in those three months to be the envy of his neighbors. "The ark is a guest which none shall lose by who bid it welcome." God's presence is a burden to the disobedient, a lifter of burdens to the obedient and trustful.

5. *Brought With Gladness.*—It was, as Taylor says, a great processional oratorio, there were symbals, psalteries of higher notes and lower, and trumpets. Doubtless, as the ark was lifted, the old wilderness cry was sounded, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered."

> O God when thou didst march of old before thy people's face,
> And led their way, by cloud and flame, through the great wilderness,
> Earth shook; the heavens before thee dropped, on Sinai tremors fell,
> Before the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel.

TO THE CONSIDERATE AN ARK OF DELIVERANCE
CARELESS DESTRUCTION

DEATH OF UZZAH.

LESSON IV. JULY 26

GOLDEN TEXT.
In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.
—Ps. lxxi. 1.

GOD'S PROMISES TO DAVID.

II. Samuel vii. 4-16.

Time.—Probably soon after the date of the last lesson, B. C. 1042.

Place.—Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, where the palace of David stood.

Introductory.—With the accession of David to the throne, there came a remarkable change in the political and social condition of Israel. The exposed and unsettled state, which had existed from the first settlement in Canaan, was ended. No external foe was feared. A firm government and a fixed capital seemed to give permanence to everything. The unsubstantial tabernacle, the migrators' tent, no longer fitted the condition of the people. David had removed the ark to a new tabernacle, but he at once felt the unfitness of such a habitation for God, while he dwelt in a palace of cedar. He desired to build a substantial temple. Every natural motive would lead to such desire; true devotion to God, the interests of his people, the stability of his throne. The lesson shows why David did not build.

ZION.

4 And it came to pass (that the same) night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nā'than, saying,

I. DAVID MAY NOT BUILD A HOUSE to GOD.

EXPLANATORY.

4. It came to pass the same night.—David desired to build a temple, a fixed habitation, for God. He called his prophet adviser and made known his feelings and wishes; and the prophet shared entirely the feeling of the king. It seemed a good and proper thing on the face of it, to build a solid and beautiful house to God. But the sentiment of the prophet, as an individual, did not prove to be the will of God.

The word of the Lord came.—The prophet was not always in the prophetic state, or able to declare on matters unrevealed, the will of God. The prophetic soul is one sensitive to the presence of God and absorbed in declaring and doing his will. "The calling of the prophet was that of a preacher or pastor on a large scale; but was distinct from our modern ideas with reference to the calling, in his drawing *directly* from Divine revelation" (*P. C.*). The spiritual sense was aroused and quickened until, in the presence of spiritual truth, the prophet might become unconscious of material surroundings. This occurred in the *vision*, when profound or far-reaching truths were often revealed in symbol. Sleep, when sense is dead to the external world, would seem a favorable time for communion of the Divine with the human spirit. Still in this state one is not duly capable of telling whether the impulse is from within or from without. Hence in revelation a subordinate place is ascribed to *dreams*. Most often, in perfect consciousness, some truth, unperceived of men, was borne in the soul of the prophet until he became as conscious of its reality as of any fact of his existence. Oehler says: "This prophetic state is most nearly related to *communion*

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, July 20.—David's Unroyalty Brings Censure (II. Sam. vi. 13-22).

Tuesday, July 21.—God's Promises to David (II. Sam. vii. 1-16).

Wednesday, July 22. — God's Covenant with Abram (Gen. xii. 1-8).

Thursday, July 23.—God's Covenant with Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 10-22).

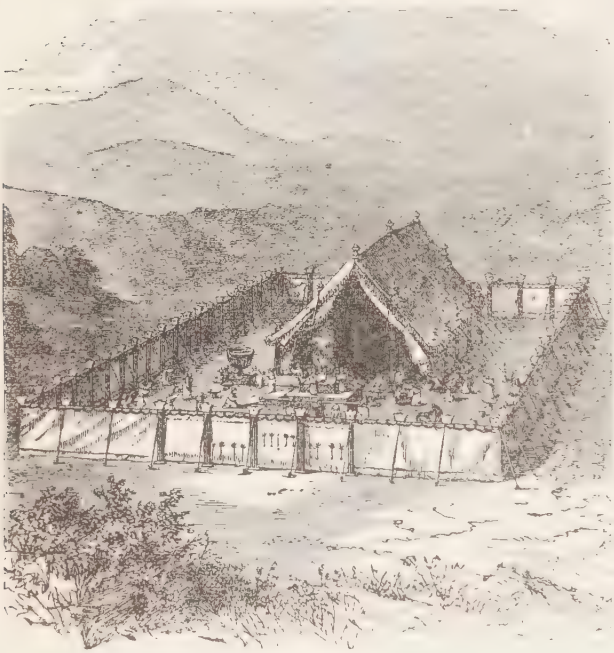
Friday, July 24.—David's Response to God's Promise (II. Sam. vii. 17-29).

Saturday, July 25.—David Remembers the Promise (Ps. cxxxii. 1-18).

Sunday, July 26.—The New and Better Covenant (Heb. viii. 1-13).

5 Go and tell my servant Dā'vid, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas For I have not dwelt in any house since the time day that I brought up the children of Is'ra-el out of E'gypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent, and in a tabernacle.



THE TABERNACLE.

7 In all the places places wherein I have walked with all the children of Is'ra-el, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Is'ra-el, whom I commanded to feed my people Is'ra-el, saying, Why build have ye not built me an house of cedar?

with God in prayer." **Unto Nathan.**—Here we first meet this prophet, the firm friend and fearless reprover of David; and the teacher, and, in a crisis, the decisive friend, of Solomon (I. Kings i.). According to tradition he wrote the lives of David and Solomon (the latter probably incomplete), which have perished. His tomb is shown not far from Hebron.

5-7. Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house?—This implies a negative answer, yet the question is not a censure; it was not an evil or unworthy thought to build a temple. But David's mission lay in other fields; it was his to unify and pacify the people. "The house of David must be firmly established, and peace secured, before this great step in the history of the national religion could be properly taken. And David was not to build the house 'because he had shed much blood, and had made great wars' (I. Chron. xxii. 8)" (*C. B.*). The king did not dismiss the house from his heart, but made elaborate plans, and gathered a wealth of material, which were sacredly committed to the hands of Solomon (I. Chron. xxviii.). **I have not dwelt in any house.**—During all the years of Israel's national existence, ever since God had granted his symbolic presence, the people had never had a secure and unthreatened dwelling place; and the Divine presence might fitly dwell in a frail and transient tent. God had moved with his people. **In a tent, and in a tabernacle.**—The *tent* referred to the outer covering of skins and goat's hair; the *tabernacle* is the inner view of the sanctuary, the closed and more substantial edifice. **Spake I words with any of the tribes?**—In I. Chron. xvii. 6, *tribes* is rendered *judges*. Whoever was in the lead, whoever in authority, God had never suggested a change from the portable tent to a fixed and imposing house. We probably feel a true satisfaction in having fixed, and beautiful, and lasting places of worship; yet the frail and movable tent always has an element that fits to our pilgrim life. We may easily come to

8 Now therefore so thus shalt thou say unto my servant Dā'vid, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to that thou shouldest be ruler prince over my people, over Is'ra-el:

9 And I was have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, from before thee; and have made I will make thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men ones that are are in the earth.

10 Moreover And I will appoint a place for my people Is'ra-el, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, their own place, and move be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, at the first,

11 And as since as from the time day that I commanded judges to be to be over my people Is'ra-el; and have caused I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also Moreover the LORD telleth thee that he the LORD will make thee an house.

12 And when When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

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identify religion and worship too much with places and circumstances. "Tied to one spot, and associated with one edifice of splendid appearance and aspiring pretensions, the service of religion would tend to become hard and sensuous, and much-regarded formality would kill spirituality" (*W. J. Deane*).

8-10. I took thee from the sheepcote.—Though the temple may not be built, God sends comforting words to David. (1) His *providential purpose* and *care* have been about him from the first. While a mere lad leading his sheep, he had been chosen for this larger leading of Israel. (2) God has made him truly *great*. He stands on even footing with the mightiest monarch of earth. It was essential to God's purpose that he should have power and renown; but it was no less a glory to him who was chosen. (3) God gives a promise of *peace for Israel*. The nation whose welfare was David's chief care should now be planted and take root, and their former oppressors should afflict them no more. God's designs are gracious; he will make good triumphant; and for that reason the future prosperity of Israel must depend upon the nation's fidelity. The rich promises of God must be conditional.

II. GOD WILL BUILD DAVID A HOUSE.

11-13. The Lord will make thee an house.—The desire of David's heart shall be fulfilled further on. He must sleep with his fathers, except by faith he can not see it; but the house he longed for shall be built, and the throne he has won shall be established to his descendants. First Solomon is referred to, who built a temple ever renowned for magnificence, which stood for about four hundred years, and left a disturbed and yet loyal kingdom to his son. But the prophecy does not end in Solomon. Nor is it be understood as spoken in a double sense, that is, as referring first to Solomon and then, glancing on, to Christ. It rather refers to the whole line of royalty, descending from David, and ending in Christ; and it is to be interpreted with respect to each so far as it applies.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

14, 15. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten.—He dealt as a father with these heirs of David, as he does with those who are co-heirs with Christ. Children who disobey must be checked and punished; it is love's way of constraining to paths of righteousness. **My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul.**—In Saul's case the kingdom was taken forever from his descendants, "no son of his succeeding," but it should not be so with this shepherd king. Keil says: The seed of David was chastened for its sins; and as its apostasy continued, it was humbled more and more, until the earthly throne of David became extinct. Nevertheless, the Lord did not cause his mercy to depart from him. When the house of David had fallen into decay, Jesus Christ was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, to raise up the throne of his father David again, to reign forever as king over the house of Jacob, and to establish the house and kingdom of David forever.

16. Thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever.—The promise is repeated to show that it is emphatic and far-reaching. Remarkable promise! David's throne was not established because he was sinless. His character is sullied by crimes of darkest hue, and there is in him a strange and painful mixture of great good and great evil. The salt that preserves his character is his genuine sincerity and earnestness both toward God and man (many of his coarser faults are owing to the darkness and low moral tone of his age); and these qualities make him not unworthy of the high place he holds among God's people. Still, the promise was not because of his deserts, but because from *some* family, and *his* family, in God's plan, was to come the Christ (*P. C.*). So the great prophecy grows more distinct. By the gate of Eden it was told that One should come to crush the death-causing serpent. Two thousand years later Abraham was told that in a descendant of his should all the families of the earth be blessed. The dying Jacob reveals that from the tribe of Judah the Shiloh shall appear. And now the family of David is singled out and made conspicuous. From it, in time, the Endless King will come.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Wish Denied. 4-9. To whom did the word of the Lord come? To whom was he commanded to go? What had been David's thought? What question does the Lord ask of him? Where does he say he has dwelt since he brought Israel out of Egypt? Had he in all this time ever intimated that he wished a permanent house built for his worship? How does he remind David of his humble origin? What does he say he has done for him? **2. A Better Way.** 10 16. What does he say he will do for Israel? What does he promise concerning the children of wickedness, and their enemies? What will he make for David? What will he do for his seed after the death of David? What shall David's seed do for the Lord? What relation shall the Lord hold to him? What correction will he have for sin? Will he ever be cast off? In whom is the throne of David established forever?

COLLECT.

Heavenly Father, bless the lesson of the hour to us. Lead us to see that even every good work is not ours to do. Help us to do the work thou givest us, and to know that every desire of holy service shall at length find glory and honor of thee. Show that each of us may build a beauteous temple unto thee; a temple eternal, the temple of our hearts. Here may we exalt and enthrone thee; through Christ. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. PAST WANDERINGS.—1 *The Prophet.*—Nathan was charged with a message which was just the opposite of his own judgment expressed the day before. Yet he delivers it without hesitation. We should not hesitate to acknowledge ourselves in error when the truth is shown to us. It may be obstinacy to hold to an opinion, it may be true greatness to change.

2. *A Worthy Purpose.*—God does not disapprove of David's thought. It is recorded in another place, "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart." (1) It is not wrong for us to wish to do great things for God, though we should let aspirations be governed by his evident purpose for us. (2) We should be ever increasing our gifts to God as he increases our ability. The beautiful home which we enjoy should be our reminder to make God's earthly house fair, the comforts which surround us should make us more ready to uplift and bless his needy children. (3) "The world's maxim," says Taylor, "is, be just before you are generous; and indeed it would be well if the world's own votaries always acted thereon, for it is very easy to be generous with other people's money. But the Christian's maxim ought to be, make your generosity a matter of justice. Be just to God, as good stewards of his manifold bounties."

3. *Years of Wandering.*—The tabernacle represented wandering and war; the temple, establishment and peace. When the kingdom was fully established, then should a temple be built. So is all human life a tenting and a warring, until the Promised Land is unquestionably ours. Our great Captain had on earth not where to lay his head. So should our finest "houses of cedar" be but as tents, while we seek a "continuing city" to come.

4. *From the Sheepcote.*—A rich man in a German city kept hanging up in a prominent place in his mansion a pair of wooden shoes, such as were worn by the poorest people. When asked why they were there, he answered: "Those are the shoes with which I entered this city when a poor boy, and I keep them there to remind me of the mercies which God has shown me" (*S. S. Journal*).

5. *A Restraining Hand at the Summit.*—It is not easy for one in a moment to reconcile himself to another arrangement of his life than that which he had planned for himself. We think of the author, who having been kept by one interruption after another from the great work to which he meant to give his life, is at last fairly in sight of its being undertaken by him, and is compelled to leave it unattempted. We think of the president who had safely piloted his country through the rapids of a terrible civil war, and was just about to reconstruct on a broader and more stable foundation a reunited nation, when he was stricken down, and the life that was shaping itself into a finished pillar became, to human view, only a broken shaft. So over and over we are taught the incompleteness of human life. And as these and similar disarrangements of earthly plans come up before us, bringing with them their appropriate feelings, we may imagine that when David saw the hope of his life cut off in a moment, he would be plunged in the deepest dejection. But it was speedily subdued. He wished to honor Jehovah, and if God preferred that he should honor Him in another way, what was he that he should question the wisdom of His choice (*Taylor*).

II. FUTURE ESTABLISHMENT.—1. *Further Preparation.*—"Haste not. God shall crown thy work at last." A stronger and broader dominion than yet had been secured was to be the human bulwark of the Holy City and the temple that should be. Nor was the latter to be hastily built with whatever material could be at once had, but the gatherings of this generation were to be bequeathed to the next. The fruit is fair to the eye and we lift our hand to pluck it, but it is beyond our reach; we shake the branch, but it will not fall, it is not yet ripe. After a time, when the sun has shone and the rain fallen upon it long enough, it drops at our feet, fit to be taken and enjoyed.

2. *Another Buildeth Thereon.*—When a great bridge is built many stones are cast into the water and lost to sight to become the firm foundation upon which the pier rises. It was a hero missionary to Africa who, when remonstrated with for throwing his life away in the hardships of pioneer mission work, replied that he would gladly be one of the sunken stones upon which the gospel structure should stand. Such must have been David's spirit, and yet there was to him an added joy, for it was to be his seed who

should build upon his foundation. So over and over in life the young builds upon the sacrifices of parents' structures fair in the sight of the world. Whose is the honor?

3. *Possessing the Promises.*—"We have many promises," say Christians, but sometimes they merely mean that they have *heard* many promises. Hearing is far from having. A rosebud is a promise of a rose, but if the heart of an iceberg received it, what blossom promise would the iceberg have? Sponge and water are promises of cleanliness, but allowed merely to rest on a dirty floor, they make nothing but mud. No man ever got hold of a promise except in a seed state. Many are foolish enough to gloat with weak satisfaction over the seed, never planting it and carrying it on to a perfect blossom (*Golden Rule*).

4. Do thy work where God hath placed thee,
Though the reaping ne'er be thine;
Fill thy place—none else can do it—
Lest thou mar his grand design.

Thou shalt claim of what thou sowest,
Though the fruit thou never see;
When the reapers bring their garners,
He will take them as from thee.

Build thy HOUSE OF HOPE According to God's PLAN OF PROMISE

PSALM CXXXII.

1 LORD, remember David, *and* all his afflictions:
2 How he sware unto the LORD, *and* vowed unto the mighty *God* of Jacob;
3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;
4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, *or* slumber to mine eyelids,
5 Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty *God* of Jacob.
6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.
7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.
8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.
9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.
10 For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.
11 The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
12 If thy children shall keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.
13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired *it* for his habitation.
14 This *is* my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.
18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

LESSON V. AUGUST 2.

DAVID'S KINDNESS.

II. Samuel ix. 1–13.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love.
—Rom. xii. 10.

Time.—Perhaps about B. C. 1040. **Places.**—Jerusalem and Lo-debar, a place east of the Jordan, and near Mahanaim.

Geographical Notes.—Lo-debar, where Mephibosheth was found in the house of Ammiel (verse 4), was near Mahanaim, where Ishbosheth reigned till his assassination. This we learn from the fact that when David fled before Absalom, and went to Mahanaim, Machir, a son of this Ammiel of Lo-debar, was one of three rich men who brought supplies to David's little army (II. Sam. xvii. 27–29). Ammiel was doubtless a warm friend of Saul's family, and being a rich and influential man, he had befriended and supported the helpless Mephibosheth when the family of the latter had fallen. David's present kindness to Mephibosheth, on the other hand, made Ammiel and his family David's friends, and the latter received a rich return for it when he was fleeing in great distress before his own rebellious son.

Introductory. — It is thought by many commentators that the dark event recorded in II. Samuel xxi. 1–11, occurred previous to the events of this lesson. Saul had cruelly wronged a native tribe — the Gibeonites — whom Israel had covenanted to preserve. He apparently had set out to exterminate them. A famine fell on Israel for three years; it was regarded as a judgment; and on inquiry it was charged to the "bloody house of Saul," for his slaughter of these Gibeonites. Some expiation must be made, and the Gibeonites asked for seven sons (or descendants) of Saul on whom to visit their vengeance; and this demand was granted. The story of Rizpah mother of two of the sons, who watched the crosses whereon the victims were hung, through the burning and weary days of summer and autumn, keeping the birds and beasts of prey away, is pathetic in the extreme. Only by transporting ourselves back to that time can we understand this mournful picture. If the slain boys themselves had taken part in despoiling and killing this peaceful tribe, the deliberate vengeance would not be especially unnatural.

The decision in this case lay with the priesthood, and not with the king. After such an event as this, David might well ask the opening question of the lesson.

Forgotten? No, we never do forget.
We let the years go; wash them clean with tears,
Leave them to bleach out in the open day;
Or lock them, like mementoes of dead friends,
Till we shall dare unfold them without pain;
But we forget not, never can forget (*Miss Mulock*).

1 And Dā'vid said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jŏn'a-than's sake?

2 And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Zī'ba; and when they had called him unto Dā'vid; and the king said unto him, Art thou Zī'ba? And he said, Thy servant is he.

3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Zī'ba said unto the king, Jŏn'a-than hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Zī'ba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Mā'chĭr the son of Am'mĭ-el, in Lo'dē-bär.

5 Then king Dā'vid sent, and fetched him out of the house of Mā'chĭr the son of Am'mĭ-el, from Lo'dē-bär.

I. A FRIEND REMEMBERED.

EXPLANATORY.

1. Is there yet any that is left?—The time of this lesson can not be closely determined. David must have reigned over Israel some six or eight years, and have gained, after his vigorous organization of his government, and his vast campaigns, a brief period of repose. He remembers now the family of Saul. No one has called his mind to them. In eastern despotisms the heirs of an adverse royal line are objects of dangerous suspicion. **That I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake.**—He had no reason to remember the house of Saul with gratitude. His best service had provoked a mad jealousy, and in spite of great forbearance he was hunted as the vilest of outlaws. Only Jonathan had shown him friendship; but this had been so spontaneous, and true, and vital, that it would be surprising if he ever for a moment forgotten it.

2, 3. Of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba.—None of the king's household knew of any descendant of Saul; but a former servant or steward, who seemed to have held the care or possession of at least parts of the estate, was known; and he was called as one who should know the fortunes of his master's family. **Jonathan hath a son.**—David had probably never heard of this son. He was born a year after David's exile from the house of Saul, and from fear and infirmity he was kept in seclusion. The stroke on Saul's house had smitten him heavily. In the confusion of flight, after the disastrous defeat in which his father perished at Gilboa, his nurse had let him fall in such a way as to break or dislocate his limbs, and he was crippled in his feet for life (chapter iv. 4). Ziba mentions this fact to awaken pity, or to show that the young man—for such he now is—is of little consequence, unworthy of any special care, or of jealousy, on the part of the king.

4, 5. He is in the house of Machir.—Machir was a man of importance of the tribe of Manasseh, and his home was near Mahanaim. He appears to have been an honorable and generous man, whose faithful care of the unfortunate boy had never failed. David himself, at a later date, had occasion to appreciate his loyal hospitality when he was a fugitive from Absalom (chapter xvii. 27-29). **King David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir.**—He did not coldly summon him, and

HELPFUL READINGS.

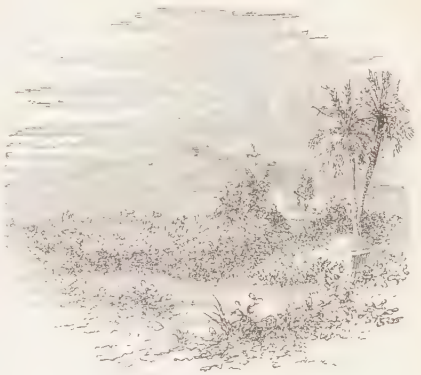
Monday, July 27.—David's Victories (II. Sam. viii. 8-18).
Tuesday, July 28.—David's Kindness (II. Sam. ix. 1-13).
Wednesday, July 29.—David's Covenant with Jonathan (I. Sam. xx. 11-23).
Thursday, July 30.—Preserved by Jonathan (I. Sam. xx. 24-42).
Friday, July 31.—Mourning for Jonathan (II. Sam. i. 17-27).
Saturday, Aug. 1.—Kindness Enjoined (Col. iii. 1-14).
Sunday, Aug. 2.—The Gain of Godliness (Ps. cxii. 1-10).

6 Now when Me-phĭb'o-shĕth, the son of Jōn'a-than, the son of Saul, was come unto Dā'vid, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And Dā'vid said, Me-phĭb'o-shĕth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 And Dā'vid said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jŏn'a-than thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?

9 Then the king called to Zī'ba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.



GILBOA.

yet from what follows it would appear that the servants did not disclose David's purpose. But the history that follows accords with the rule that ultimately and eternally prevails: Jonathan befriended David, and David remembers it. David is kind to the lame orphan, and Machir remembers it. Machir was kind to both, and somewhere he has reaped his reward. Every kindness is repaid in God's good time.

II. AN ADOPTED SON.

6, 7. And Mephibosheth . . . came unto David.—The name Merib-baal ("contender with Baal") of I. Chron. viii. 31, is here changed to Mephibosheth ("Destroyer of Shame"). Eastern people, as judged by the western, are extravagant in their expressions of friendship, and in their manifestations of homage. Mephibosheth only followed custom when he bowed himself to the ground and did obesiance to the king. When addressed he avows himself a subject, even a servant. **And David said unto him, Fear not.**—David reassures him, and straightforwardly promises him three things: 1. His own personal regard and friendship, for his father's sake. 2. A restoration of the estate that had belonged to his grandfather Saul, thus securing to him fortune and permanent independence. 3. A place in his own household, and at his own table, thus receiving him as one of his own family, and establishing his royalty.

8. He did obesiance, and said, What is thy servant?—The depreciating expression is painful to us. The eastern dog was despised while living, and dead he was despicable and repulsive in the extreme. But the expression is far from uncommon. David in addressing Saul had called himself a dead dog and a flea (I. Sam. xxiv. 14). Something in the condition and tone of Mephibosheth gives pathos to his words. He is without fortune or kin, he is helpless and deformed, and the spear-point of misfortune has entered his soul. Even in the grandeur of the palace he will wear a cruel physical chain.

9-11. All that pertaineth unto Saul.—Doubtless Saul's estates had been large, and perhaps they and their revenues had been turned to the royal treasury; but now the property and its income is made over to Mephibosheth. Ziba is so informed, and he is placed in charge. He has servants and standing, and will be a responsible man. Although the son of Jonathan will eat at David's table, and have all personal wants met from the royal bounty, he has a family of his own, and has need to maintain his priva e

10 Thou therefore, And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants; shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food bread to eat: but Me-phĭb'o-shĕth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Zĭ'ba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Zĭ'ba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Me-phĭb'o-shĕth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Me-phĭb'o-shĕth had a young son, whose name was Was Mī'cha. And all that dwelt in the house of Zĭ'ba were were servants unto Me-phĭb'o-shĕth.

13 So Me-phĭb'o-shĕth dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lĕm: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and He was lame on both his feet.

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establishment. **Thou shalt till the land for him.**—Ziba was to farm the estate, and every year was to bring the proper return to Jerusalem, for its owner's use. **So shall thy servant do.**—He accepted the place. His service is not complained of; though he seems cruelly to have slandered Mephibosheth, at the time of Absalom's rebellion, to his own selfish advantage (chapters xvi. 1-4; xix. 17-29).

12, 13. Had a young son.—This son was well reared, and from him came numerous descendants to perpetuate the name of Jonathan. **Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem.**—Not on his estates, for he was unfitted for active outdoor life, and his best care and company would center in the king's house. As a result doubtless of his lameness, he seemed dependent and feeble in character, but he was well cared for to the end of his life. And the history does David honor; it is a pleasant picture from his troubled reign.

"Good deeds can never die:
They with the sun and moon renew their light,
Forever blessing those who look upon them."

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Son of Jonathan. 1-5. What did David desire to know? Who was brought to him as able to give information? Why did David wish to find any of the house of Saul? Who was the only one remaining? What was the physical condition of Jonathan's son? What had caused this? Where was he living? What did David at once do? What promise did he fulfill in befriending him? **2. The Adopted Son of David.** 6-12. How did Mephibosheth act in the presence of David? How did he reply to David's greeting? What three things did David promise him? What did he answer? What did David tell Ziba that he had given to his Master's son? What charge did he give him? What did Ziba say to the king? Who composed the family and household of Mephibosheth? How was he personally provided for?

COLLECT.

Heavenly Father, wilt thou fill us with the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits. As we shall wish thy forgiveness, may we ever forgive; as we shall wish thy compassion, may we be ever kind. May we remember that every good and gentle deed of earth will add its sweetness to the endless life. In Christ: Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. REMEMBERED OBLIGATION.—1. *A Late Remembrance.*—Long years had passed since the promise of old was made. It had been possible, perhaps, even if not convenient, to have fulfilled it earlier; yet it is now royally remembered, though late, and an opportunity sought, since it had not presented itself. We sometimes hear people say that they feel ashamed to do a thing which they ought to have done before, but as long as the possibility and need remain, the obligation remains, and a promise kept late is yet a promise unbroken. *We should seek the opportunity.*

2. *Of the House of Saul.*—Not searching out a possible rival to slay him, as other kings have done, but seeking a descendant of his deadly enemy to heap blessings upon him. He had forgiven Saul's enmity and persecutions, but he now by act most fully proves his sincerity. It is our duty not simply to forgive in words, but to show our profession sincere by deeds.

3. *For Jonathan's Sake.*—There was a stronger reason for this act of David. There were once a peasant boy and a prince who loved each other as they loved their own souls, but the king, the prince's father, hated the peasant boy because the favor of God was with him, and he sought to slay him, but he fled to the prince, his friend. And the prince said, "It is not so," but his friend answered that it was assuredly true, but that the king had hidden his purpose from the prince because he was his friend. And the prince said, "Come, let us get out into the field," and out into the soothing presence of nature walked the two friends, sad at heart for the wrong that was in the world, and over their lives. And the prince made his friend a promise that he would discover the king's purpose and save his life if it were so, and he made the peasant boy swear that when his enemies had been all cut off by God, he would not cut off his kindness from his old friend, the prince, or his house forever. And the prince kept his word, and the two friends bade each other a last sad farewell, and parted, and David, the peasant boy, escaped. Can David, the king, forget that scene, and the affection which was tender and true to the end? The time has come which the almost prophetic eye of Jonathan foresaw, the enemies of David are cut off, and—yes, he remembers.

4. *A Rare Example.*—There is a curious Russian fable which relates that all the virtues were once invited to an entertainment. In the course of the evening the host noticed two beautiful ladies who seemed to be unacquainted with each other. He accordingly introduced them: "Benevolence—Gratitude; Gratitude—Benevolence." They were delighted to make one another's acquaintance, having never met before. The satire contained in this fable is striking, but not of universal application. Earthly benevolence has met with gratitude although too rarely (*S. S. Journal.*) Notice that David did not simply ask for any of the house of Jonathan—all he had promised—but his gratitude includes any of the house of Saul.

5. *After Many Days.*—The certain result of sin, and conflict with Jehovah, had come to pass in the almost complete extinction of Saul's family. One remained, a crippled, broken-spirited youth, yet the child of Jonathan, and one to whom David might show the kindness which had been shown to him. We need never fear that a kind deed will be useless, even for ourselves. Though it be not thy noblest motive thou needest not hesitate to cast thy bread upon the waters.

> "You may think it lost forever, but sure as God is true,
> In this life or in the other, it will yet return to you."

II. A GRACIOUS FULFILLMENT.—1. *A Humble Spirit.*—As David had bowed before Saul and Jonathan, so Mephibosheth bows before David, and rates himself with the vilest of creatures. David could say no worse. "He that is down need fear no fall." But from his humility David could and did lift him to a loftier position. True greatness takes no pleasure in making others feel their inferiority.

2. *Jonathan thy Father.*—The most wretched and abandoned are still the lost children of a Father who has shown more than Jonathan's kindness to us. All we can do for them for Christ's sake he will accept as unto him. St. Gregory, it is said, was accustomed to entertain every evening at his table twelve poor men. One night he saw

to his surprise not twelve but thirteen. He spoke to his steward, but upon counting them over the steward said, "Holy father, there are surely twelve only." And Gregory held his peace; and after the meal he called forth the unbidden guest, and asked, "Who art thou?" And he replied, "I am the poor man whom thou didst formerly relieve; but my name is 'The Wonderful,' and through me thou shalt obtain whatever thou shalt ask of God." So our Lord comes to us and we know him not, unless we remember his words. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

3. *For Christ's Sake.*—David can see neither Saul's blood, nor lame legs in Mephibosheth, while he sees in him the features of his friend Jonathan; how much less shall the God of mercies regard our infirmities, or the corrupt blood of our sinful progenitors, while he beholds in us the face of his Son, in whom he is well pleased (*Hall*).

III. LOST AND FOUND.—The story of Mephibosheth may be issued as a little *parable* of the spiritual history of every one who is restored to God. He was: 1. A prince. 2. Lost. 3. Sought. 4. Found. 5. Self-abased. 6. Comforted. 7. Exalted. The gifts of God are worthy of himself. When one, to whom Alexander gave a city, declined to accept it, on the ground that he was too humble and it was unsuitable to his condition, the king said: "I do not ask what it is becoming in you to receive, but what it is becoming in me to give" (*P. C.*).

A Friend was KNIT KIND to a Friend's SOUL SON

GOLDEN TEXT.
The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
—Psa. xxvii. 1.

LESSON VI. AUGUST 9.

DAVID'S VICTORIES.

II. Samuel x. 8-19.

Time.—1036, B. C. **Place.**—Rabbah, the capital of Ammon, about twenty miles east of the Jordan.

Geographical Notes.—The first battle mentioned in this lesson was fought before the gates of Rabbah (xi. 1). This was the principal city of Ammon, or the Ammonites, and it was situated near the edge of the desert east of the Jordan. The river Jabbok rises out of the ground about a mile south of it, and runs through it. It is a ruin now, but the ruins are very massive, showing that it was once a magnificent city, and very strongly fortified. That part through which the Jabbok flowed was built on low ground, while another part was built on the summit of a mountain which rises abruptly from the edge of the lower town to a height of about three hundred feet. When Joab afterward sent word to David, "I have taken the city of waters," he doubtless meant the lower part (xii. 27). The other towns mentioned in the account of this and the subsequent battle, have not been identified by modern explorers; but they appear to have been on the border of Syria, which lay to the north of the land of Israel.

RUINS AT RABBAH.

Intermediate History.—Not only was David a great organizer, but he was also of necessity a great conqueror. Fortunately for him and his nation, his long and severe training in camp and field had made him a commander of the first rank. "And he who sang so sweetly to the harp had to wield the sword in many a bloody encounter to preserve the existence of Israel and fulfill its great destiny."

Subjugation of the Philistines.—Although utterly defeated at the beginning of his reign, the Philistines remained a constant and dangerous enemy on his western border. In one battle with this people, David was nearly overcome and slain, barely being saved by his nephew, Abishai. After this his soldiers demanded that he should not go to the front of battle, lest he perish, and "quench the light of Israel" (II. Sam. xxi. 15-17). The Philistines were entirely defeated, their cities were captured, and they never rallied to trouble Israel.

War With Moab.—Although David, from Ruth, held kinship with Moab, that people were hostile to his kingdom. Jewish tradition relates that they treacherously killed his father and mother, who in Saul's day had been left to their protection. They seem to have been an aggressive and plundering people, who practiced intolerable cruelties. Nearly their whole army was taken, and two-thirds of the men were deliberately slain. We shudder at the savagery and "cowardly cruelty" of those old days; yet we will do well to remember that all war is savagery, and has "cowardly cruelty" mixed with its heroism.

War With Ammon.—David never seems to have waged an unprovoked war. There never was an apparent thought of disturbing the Syrian kingdom which occupied an important front on the northwest. On the east, but a little beyond the Jordan, was the kingdom of the Ammonites, strong in itself, and able to

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, August 3.—War with Ammon and Syria (II. Sam. x. 1-19).
Tuesday, August 4.—"Lead Me to the Rock" (Ps. lxi. 1-8).
Wednesday, Aug. 5.—"Through God We Shall Do Valiantly" (Ps. lxi. 1-12).
Thursday, Aug. 6.—Be Strong in the Lord (Eph. vi. 10-20).
Friday, Aug. 7.—Be Sober Unto Prayer (I. Pet. iv. 1-14).
Saturday, Aug. 8.—God is My High Tower (Ps. lix. 1-17).
Sunday, Aug. 9.—The Lesson in Chronicles (I. Chron. xix. 1-19).

summon stronger allies from the farther east. With this kingdom David held, and desired still to hold, friendly relations. On the death of the king he sent to his successor messengers bearing his respect and sympathy. But one of those silly upstarts, such as in artificial royalties and aristocracies are always coming to the front, had climbed into the throne. The kingdom on his west was growing too important to please him, and he desired war. So committing the grossest insult on the messengers, he sent them home. As a result, David was involved in long and desperate wars.

War With Edom.—Before the Syrian struggle, detailed in this lesson, was over, the Edomites, whose home was to the south, alarmed at the strides of Israel, decided to assist Ammon, and began an invasion. An army under Abishai was sent against them, and in a great battle at the foot of the Dead Sea, they were entirely defeated; and following in swift pursuit the Israelite commander captured their rocky capital, Petra. Joab, when relieved of command at the north, took charge of affairs in Edom, and so ruthlessly hunted and pursued the inhabitants that they were well nigh exterminated. A remnant, however, was left tributary to Israel.

8 And the children of Am'mŏn came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syr'ĭ-ans of Zo'ba, and of Rē'hob, and Ish'-tob, the men of Tob and Mā'a-cah, were by themselves in the field.

9 When Now when Jō'ăb saw that the front of the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Is'ra-el, and put them in array against the Syr'ĭ-ans:

I. CAMPAIGN AGAINST AMMON.

EXPLANATORY.

8. The children of Ammon came out.—At the opening of hostilities, David, not waiting to be invaded and attacked upon his own soil, sent the army of Israel under command of Joab directly against Rabbah, the capital of Ammon. This city, on the headwaters of the Jabbok, had a long and eventful history. The army of the Ammonites marched out of the city to offer Israel battle in the open field. There was a good reason why they should do this. **And the Syrians of Zobah.**—Hanun, king of the Ammonites, knowing well what would be the result of his insult, speedily secured to himself allies. The kingdom of Zobah, which embraced the broad reach of territory from Hamath, and the eastern slopes of Lebanon on the west, to the Euphrates River on the east, under Hadarezar, an able king, sent the largest contingent of 20,000 footmen. The other little states which took part in the war lay mostly between the territory of Zobah and that of Israel; Rehob lay to the north of Palestine; Maachah east of Rehob; and Tob southeast of Gennesaret. **Were by themselves in the field.**—We learn in I. Chron. xix. 7, that the war was really begun by the invasion of this Syrian army. They made a rallying point at Medeba, a town in the territory of Reuben, about twelve miles east of the north end of the Dead Sea; it was while they were seated before this town that Joab, whom David had placed in command of the Israelite army, marched his forces across the Jordan and headed straight for the Ammonites at Rabbah. The result of this march was to throw his army between the Ammonites and the Syrians. He evidently intended to prevent a junction of their forces.

9, 10. When Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind.—The Syrian army, hastily following, came upon his rear, while the Ammonites were on his front. All this he had doubtless expected; but he could fight on ground of his own choosing, and before the allies could meet or come to any understanding. His position was dangerous, for in case of defeat he would have had a powerful enemy on his rear. **He chose of all the choice men.**—He saw the Syrians were his most dangerous enemies, and his main and decisive struggle must be with

10 And the rest of the people he delivered / committed into the hand of A-bĭsh'ā-ī his brother, that / and he might put them / them in array against the children of Am'mŏn.

11 And he said, If the Syr'ĭ-ans be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Am'mŏn be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good.

13 And So / Then Jō'ăb drew nigh, and the people that were with him, / and the people that were with him drew nigh unto the battle against the Syr'ĭ-ans: and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Am'mŏn saw that the Syr'ĭ-ans were fled, then fled / they also / likewise fled before A-bĭsh'ā-ī, and entered into the city. So / Then Jō'ăb returned from the children of Am'mŏn, and came to Je-ru'sa-lĕm.

15 And when the Syr'ĭ-ans saw that they were smitten / put to the worse before Is'ra-el, they gathered themselves together.

16 And Had-ăr-ē'zer sent, and brought out the Syr'ĭ-ans that were / were beyond the River / river: and they came to Hē'lam; and / with Shō'băch the captain of the host of Hăd-ăr-ē'zĕr went / at their head before them.

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them. He left with his brother, Abishai, enough force to hold the Ammonites in check, while with the flower of his army he faced the Syrians.

11, 12. If the Syrians be too strong for me.—Joab realized the seriousness of the situation. He and Abishai must have an understanding; a small reserve might be restored by a little timely assistance. **Be of good courage, and let us play the men.**—This is one of the briefest and best of appeals to a religious patriotism. This exhortation came expressly to his own men, for if disaster overcame them, there would be small hope for the body under Abishai.

13, 14. Joab and the people that were with him drew nigh.—They made a well ordered and furious assault. The cavalry and numerous chariots of the Syrians could make no headway against troops that moved so swiftly and in such trained unison; the struggle was quickly over, and the Syrian army was a flying wreck. The Ammonites, seeing that open battle on their part would now be disastrous, retreated within their walls and prepared for siege.

II. THE SECOND CAMPAIGN.

15, 16. When the Syrians saw.—The severe defeat of the Syrians before Rabbah had the effect of changing, for a time, the character of the contestants. Hadarezer had simply hired out, or allowed his subjects to hire out, armies of trained mercenaries to help Ammon in her struggle. But to have a Syrian army annihilated by the Israelites, and pay no heed to it,—this would never do. The Syrian king became directly involved in a struggle which ruined him, by engaging, from mercinary motives, in a struggle from which in honor he should have kept aloof. **Brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river.**—He summoned troops from all his tributaries, even from beyond the Euphrates. Damascus was involved. And with a host which under him had hitherto been victorious, he advanced to crush this new foe, and recover his prestige. His own general, Shobach, was placed in command. **They came to Helam.**—A place unknown; but the decisive battle was fought near Hamath.

17 And when it was told Dā'vid; and he gathered all Is'ra-el together, and passed over Jôr'dan, and came to Hē'lam. And the Syr'ĭ-ans set themselves in array against Dā'vid, and fought with him.

18 And the Syr'ĭ-ans fled before Is'ra-el; and Dā'vid slew of the Syr'i-ans *the men of* seven hundred chariots, of the Syr'i-ans, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shō'băch the captain of their host, who that he died there.

19 And when all the kings *that* were that were servants to Hăd-ăr-ē'zĕr saw that they were smitten put to the worse before Is'ra-el, they made peace with Is'ra-el, and served them. So the Syr'ĭ-ans feared to help the children of Am'mŏn any more.

17, 18. And it was told David.—David knew that the defeat at Rabbah would be a mere sting, and that the great Syrian power would be essentially untouched; he kept close watch of events, and seeing the coming storm prepared to meet it. He called out all the military resources of his kingdom, and marching across the Jordan, sought, with his usual promptness, to make the camp of Hadarezer his rendezvous. The disparity of forces was very great, and in the Syrian army were doubtless bodies of men of rare skill and prowess; but as a mass, the motley host was no match for the compact army of David, led by officers who had been trained on almost every kind of field to act together. At first, at points in the field, we may well believe there was desperate and doubtful fighting, but ere long routed bodies brought confusion to the whole mass; and in David's time, an Israelite army never allowed an enemy time to recover from confusion. **And the Syrians fled.**—Involved in hopeless flight, their chariots proved disastrous to themselves, and when the day's work was done there was no Syrian army.

19. When all the kings that were serving Hadarezer saw.—The results of this victory were far-reaching. The king of Damascus was involved in Hadarezer's ruin, and after a struggle in which 22,000 of its defenders perished, it passed into David's hands. At length all the territory between Lebanon and the Euphrates submitted to the Jewish conqueror. Jewish garrisons were placed in the important towns, and tribute was paid to an empire that seemed suddenly and yet substantially to arise. The friends of Rabbah had perished, and only one fate awaited the defenders of the citadel.

POINTS TO NOTE.

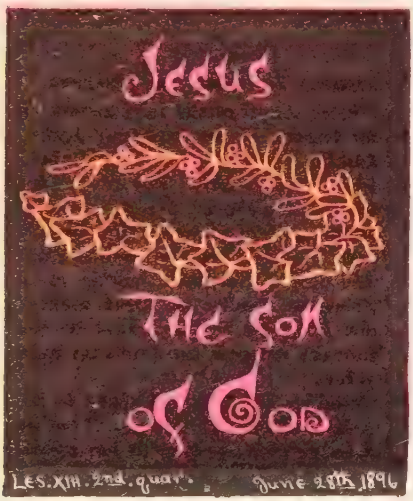
1. Enemies Fleeing. 8–14. With whom were the Israelites at war? What had caused the trouble? Who were allied with the Ammonites? What were the positions of the two divisions of the enemy's army as related to Joab's? Whom did Joab choose to meet the Syrians? What disposal did he make of the rest of the army? What was to be done in case either division should be losing ground? What was Joab's exhortation? With whom did he leave the result? What did the Syrians do when Joab and his men advanced? Seeing this, what did the Ammonites do? Where did Joab go? **2. Enemies Subdued.** 15–19. What next did the Syrians do? Where did Haradezer send for help? What did David do when he heard of this? What was the result of this battle? Who and how many of the Syrians were slain? What did the tributary kings do? What was the result of this war?

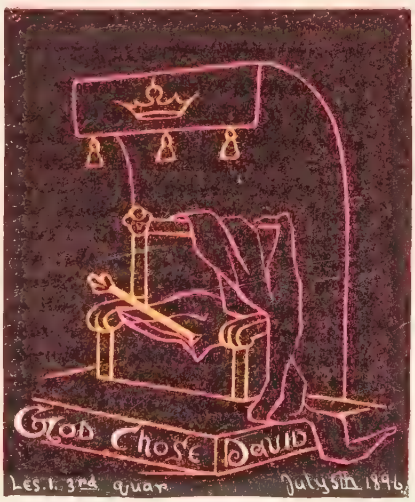
COLLECT.

Father in heaven, we behold that there is yet a great work to be done in this world, and hard battles to be fought. Thy pure kingdom is yet too poorly established in the hearts of men, and the hosts of ignorance and vice are strong. Fill us with thy Spirit, train us to be heroes of the cross, and help us, we do pray, to win mighty battles for thy cause. May the truth, as it is in Jesus, enlighten the mind, and win the heart, and transform the life of all the world. Help us to hasten the day; we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us be
Linked to
self
faith
christ
Jesus Christ
Les. XI 2nd. quar.
June 14th 1896

Hallelujah
to the
Savior
Les. XII 2nd. quar.
June 21st 1896


Jesus
The Son
of God
Les. XIII. 2nd. quar.
June 28th 1896


God Chose David
Les. I. 3rd quar.
July 5th 1896

Jesus
King
of Heaven
God
Chose Him
Les II 3rd quar.
July 12th 1896

Blessed is he
who trusts
in
God's word
Les III 3rd quar.
July 19th 1896

Hints for Blackboard Talks.

LESSON XII.—SECOND QUARTER.

Alleluiah, Halleluiah! He is risen. The weary waiting disciples did not realize that the first glad halleluiah would be caught and sounded down eighteen centuries, and lose not a note of its gladness. He is risen. The gates are flung wide open, and the light of heaven streams down into the hearts of men, bringing conviction that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of mankind. He has risen. He has gained the victory over death. The tomb is not the loathsome abiding place of the dead; it is the gate of eternal life. Halleluiah! He has risen, and the eyes are turned heavenward that seek his glory. The heart looks upward as it sings the glad anthem of a risen Lord.

LESSON I.—THIRD QUARTER.

With the Third Quarter the lessons are taken from the Old Testament. The blackboard talk ought to be the link between the Old Testament and the New, between the prophecy and the fulfillment. David, King of Judah, is a title that will allow a wide development. Sketch the character of David, his call to the kingship. Develop the fact that he was one of the direct ancestors of the Christ. The sweet singer of Israel; The chosen of God; The writer of Psalms; The shepherd boy who was called when humbly serving his father. Develop a good picture of David that will serve as a blackboard for the eight lessons on David.

LESSON III.—THIRD QUARTER.

The Ark of the Covenant represented a principle to the Israelites. God had set it aside as a sacred thing. Yet it was not to be reverenced as the idolatrous nations worshiped their idols. They were to look beyond the ark to the God who gave them the ark. The Word of God is the record of God's word and work, and he is blessed who makes it a companion and a friend. Yet God is over all. The ark brought its greatest blessing in that it turned the hearts of the people toward God. God blesses, with a clearer understanding of God, the one who makes a companion of the Word of God.

LESSON XI.—SECOND QUARTER.

Jesus Christ was crucified on Calvary that he might atone for the sin of the world. There is no scene like it in history; no human thought of half of the interest to the race as this. Yet beautiful as it may be, and full of the divine plan, it may mean nothing to you or to me. We must join Christ in the sacrifice. His the atonement, ours the acceptance, and unless we are linked to Christ by a faith that can not be shaken, the sacrifice of Calvary is but a dramatic story, so far as we are concerned. God has made it easy for us by taking the great sacrifice of Christ. How many would be saved if they had to die on the cross for their own sins, and how many would be willing to die for others?

LESSON XIII.—SECOND QUARTER.

Press the question in a review of the lessons of the quarter. Jesus; Teacher; Healer; Helper; Prophet; Priest; King; Lord; but more vital to us than all these, Jesus; Saviour; Jesus the Son of God; The Sent of God; The only begotten Son of God; The only Name given among men. These are studies of great beauty; but Jesus *my* Saviour must be the thought before it can profit the individual.

God has made it very easy to become a Christian; but he will not be satisfied with less than he has asked. Are you a Christian? Then tell some one else. Tell some one the glad story of a personal Saviour.

LESSON II.—THIRD QUARTER.

God chose David to be a king. God sent Jesus to be King over the hearts of men, and he is now King of Heaven.

Jesus is the great King. We can realize his heavenly kingship. It seemeth right that he should be King of heaven. We must not forget that he wore a crown of thorns that he might fulfill the work for which God sent him.

Kingly honors are not always unattended with care. A kingly character that will stand comparison with the character of David; that is moulded after the Christ model, is not acquired without sacrifice and effort.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE AMMONITES DEFEATED.—1. Note that the Ammonites (1) were offenders against a friendly power. So do unbelievers seek a cause of strife with One who would do them only good. (2) They found that they were dealing with a power which was stronger than they. Unbelief realizes this, and gathers to its assistance all the powers of earth and sea and corrupt human nature. (3) They might have made amends and saved themselves from utter ruin, but instead they became more hostile. So the unbeliever, if he do not yield, grows more rebellious. (4) They were destroyed, and their allies made tributary to David. So unbelief is moving on to its complete destruction, and the powers of nature, reason, and science, which it calls to its assistance, are becoming more and more the handmaids of religion.

2. *Before and Behind.*—

How can I go back, for regret is behind me,
How dare I press on, for distrust is ahead.
Fear not, for the might of our God hath entwined thee
And ere thou shalt reach them the foe will have fled thee.

3. *Choice Men.*—In the late war there was a detachment of men needed for an especially important and perilous undertaking. The general went into the soldiers' prayer-meeting and chose the men who were in the front seat. Certainly the earnest Christian, of all men, ought to be ready, able, and fearless in time of need and danger.

4. *A Harmonious Division.*—Division is not always weakening. The sentinel must guard all points. Health is preserved and life lengthened, not by the extreme development of certain physical powers, which is usually at the expense of others, but by giving each its share of culture; athletes are usually short lived. Manufacturers have learned that the best article represents not a unit of labor, but a combination, in other words a division of labor. It is made not by any one man, but by many. In a bicycle factory the enameling of the wheels is done by certain men, other parts are made or finished by others, and the tires may be secured from a different firm entirely, and the product is only more perfect on this account.

5. *Joab's Exhortation.*—Short, but full of the spirit of mutual helpfulness, loyalty, and faith. (1) We come by a readiness to help each other, nearer the balancing of rights and wrongs, and the turning of wrong into right than we shall come in any other way this side of the judgment. (2) His intense patriotism reminds one of a later hero.

"Strike for your altars and your fires,
Strike for the green graves of your sires,
God and your native land."

II. THEIR ALLIES SCATTERED.—1. *The Flight of the Syrians.*—The generalship of Joab wins, and he has no need of the arranged help from the other division of his army, nor had it need of his. Yet it has been well said that we do not hinder success by preparing for disappointments, if we do it with a view of turning these into victories.

2. *Regathering Over the Jordan.*—George Eliot speaks of the conflicts within one's own soul—"one shadowy army fighting another and the slain shadows forever rising again." What if they do rise again? Can we not keep on winning victories, knowing that some one must be the last? Longfellow, too, sings of this phantom army "encamped beside life's rushing stream," but at the call to prayer—

"Down the broad Vale of Tears afar
The spectral camp is fled;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
Our ghastly fears are dead."

3. *An Enlarged Dominion.*—The promise to Abraham was now fulfilled, and his seed possessed the land even unto the river Euphrates. David sings:

Peoples unknown to me do me homage;
At the report of my fame they obey me;
Sons of foreign races pay court to me.

But he does not claim the glory:

Exalted be the God of my salvation
Who has subdued the nations under me.

David was now at the height of his glory. Other kings of his day were worshiped as half divine. The lives and property of their subjects were counters with which they might sport as it pleased them. It is to David's honor that, with every temptation to play the eastern despot, he bore himself, on the whole, with a tender moderation which never invaded the ancient liberties of the nation, endearing him in life and making his memory sacred among his people forever (*Geikie*).

5. *The Victory that Overcometh the World.*—At the first battle of Fredericksburg, while the attacking army had advanced beyond the Rappahannock, each of the several divisions crossing the stream in the very face of the enemy—here dashing upon the foe, here storming a redoubt, there grappling hand to hand with the enemy—on the other side of the river, upon an eminence stood the commanding general, surrounded by orderlies ready to carry any commands that were given them. Just at his side was the telegraphic battery, with wires carried in the rear of each division wherever it went, so that the single mind of Burnside controlled every movement of the advancing army scattered over many miles of the river bank. So God controlled the movements of his people to bring about the end, which he desired, and while they were loyal to him gave them victory over their foes. So God watches the movements of his own to-day, and while they hold the wires which keep them in touch with him, the electric flash of his loving will guides them wherever they go.

GOD GOES WITH HIS OWN HOSTS HIS FOES FRIENDS VANQUISHED VICTORIOUS

DAVID DEDICATING HIS TREASURE TO THE LORD.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. —Psa. li. 10.

LESSON VII. AUGUST 16.

DAVID'S CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS.

Psalm xxxii. 1-11.

Time.—The dark sin of David was committed about B. C. 1035. This psalm was written at some period not long after. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Introductory.—With this penitential psalm our lesson passes over the darkest scene in the life of David. The king now stood in the zenith of his glory. The dream inspired by early prophecies seemed under him to be realized. The foes of Israel were conquered, and the land of promise seemed all her own. It may seem strange that the Bible should publish so fully the story of David's shameful fall. Any other book would have dwelt much on his great campaigns, and said little or nothing of this. But this Book of books covers and gilds no sin, and shows plainly how a just God holds to stern account the guilt of the highest and most favored.

The Story of Uriah and Bathsheba.—While the long siege of Rabbah, the last unsubdued stronghold on Israel's frontier, was in progress, Uriah, a Hittite, but a proselyte of Israel, was serving with David's forces before the doomed city. His wife, Bathsheba, at her home in Jerusalem, was seen by David, and the guilty passion of the king had led him to do a gross and cruel wrong. The struggle of David to free himself from the results of this foul sin, gives a bright view of the moral tone of Israel. An ordinary eastern despot might freely indulge in lust and murder, but this could not be tolerated in Israel. Marriage bonds were sacred, and even this mighty king must hide his sin. Uriah was a prominent commander in the "Imperial Guards" of the Israelite army. The father of Bathsheba was another commander; and her grandfather, Ahithophel, was David's wisest counselor. Joab, probably, not knowing the occasion of David's command to sacrifice Uriah, obeyed it; and the wronged husband, perhaps, never dreaming of the wrong that had been done him, died a hero in battle.

The Prophet Nathan.—Yet David's sin was not covered. The Prophet Nathan demands an audience, and telling a story of a cruel wrong, gets righteous judgment from the king. He was angry, and said the offender deserved to die. And the stern prophet, pointing his finger at the king, says, "Thou art the man" (II. Sam. xii.). He proceeds to pronounce fearful judgments, and life-long sorrows. The sensual transgressions of David have culminated, and his sin has found him out. . . . The point most important to note is, that David does not stay the prophet; he does not deny, he does not excuse himself. His foul deed will be published to his people, and to all time; but he confesses all. He seems to bow in silent contrition, but in such Psalms as the Fifty-first and Thirty-second, he breaks forth in renewed confession, in appeals for mercy, in gratitude for forgiveness. But though forgiven, the results of sin follow. He is now about fifty years old, and he will reign twenty years more. But his face bears marks of sorrow, and the tone of the singer changes. Troubles in his household, and in his kingdom, press upon him. And the sorest of them have direct connection with the sin of this great fall.

1 Blessed *is he whose* (is he whose) transgression (is) forgiven, *whose* (whose) sin (is) covered.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Aug. 10.—A True Soldier and a Lustful King (II. Sam. xi. 1-13).

Tuesday, Aug. 11.—Disguised Murder (II. Sam. xi. 14-27).

Wednesday, Aug. 12.—Rebuke and Judgment (II. Sam. xii. 1-14).

Thursday, Aug. 13.—Birth of Solomon (II. Sam. xii. 15-25).

Friday, Aug. 14.—To Each Man According to his Work (Rev. xxii. 1-15).

Saturday, Aug. 15.—David's Confession and Forgiveness (Ps. xxxii. 1-11).

Sunday, Aug. 16.—Another Penitential Psalm (Ps. li. 1-19).

EXPLANATORY.

I. BLESSEDNESS OF FORGIVENESS.

1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.—Every one has sinned; blessed is he who has found the way of forgiveness. Sin is here spoken of under three terms: 1. Transgression signifies the *passing over a boundary;* doing what is prohibited. 2. Sin signifies the *missing of a mark;* failing to

2 Blessed *is* is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and And in whose spirit *there is* there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through Through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my My moisture is turned into was changed as with the drought of summer. Se'lah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Se'lah.

6 For this shall let every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in Surely when the floods of great waters overflow they shall not come nigh reach unto him.

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give life its proper direction, or to do what has been commanded. 3. Iniquity is an act outside of justice or righteousness. Iniquity is in-*equity*, a deed unfair and unjust. These elements are found in all sins; they were notably found in David's great sin. Three expressions also signify deliverance: 1. Forgiveness, a *bearing away* of sin. From its nature a sin can not be removed or borne away until it is cut loose from,—until in repentance one ceases from continual and willful sin. 2. Covered, that is buried up and hidden from sight. David had tried the evil method of covering sin,—he had tried to *conceal* it. Only God can cover sins so they will remain covered. 3. Not imputed. Here is a larger and more gracious term. The sin taken away, or covered, is not to be remembered or charged against us. Blessednesses, the psalmist says, belong to one who is so freed, whose heart conceals nothing, but is open and pure; and whose spirit is sincere and guileless.

3. When I kept silence.—He knew the pain of carrying concealed sin. Hidden from others, it was all the more present to himself. It affected the health and vigor of his body, his bones waxed cold; he roared in spirit like a wild beast in pain, and his heart was full of sighs and moans, whether expressed or not. Day or night he knew no rest, for the hand of God was on his conscience. He lived in days of spiritual drought; cheerful praises he could not sing, and blessed communion he could not hope for; the dews and refreshing showers of heavenly favor did not descend upon him. Sad, and yet blessed, is pain for sin! The body that feels not the pain of disease is death-struck. The soul that suffers keenly for its sin, may yet be healed. The soul that has grown indifferent, is dead.

II. THE FRUITS OF CONFESSION.

5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee.—A sudden shock brought David to himself. As a flash of lightning in a dark night revealed to an Alpine traveler the precipice over which he was about to step, and sent him shrinking backward; so a flash of heavenly light arrested David. He acknowledged, and revealed, and confessed his sins. He not only *admitted* that of which he was accused, but he *disclosed;* and furthermore, confessed his acts to be *sins*. **And thou forgavest the iniquity.**—Nathan had given assurance of this. And when the soul makes all possible restitution, and meets the expressed will of God in humble and obedient spirit it holds a consciousness of divine acceptance.

6, 7. Let every one that is godly pray unto thee.—Every one that believes and loves God; any other can not truly pray. He is to pray in season; there comes a time when the unrestrained and unrepented effect of sins upon our own souls has passed all conceivable remedy—when God can not be found. **When the great waters overflow.**—The low lands along rivers and coasts are sometimes dreadfully overflooded. The safety is in higher land. So earthly losses and sorrows will sometimes come in floods; but if the soul has climbed high enough to find God, it shall be

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Se'lah.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye upon thee.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they will not come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

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preserved. **Thou art my hiding place.**—David well knew what the shelter of high crags and rocky caverns meant, in early life; he knew the shelter of divine communion and care and love in his later life. **Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance.**—To the true believer in God, many earthly losses are not real losses, and occasion little regret; and real losses are only for a time, there will be abundant restoration.

Faith joins the future to the now,
And brings the far off nigh.

ILL GIVING COUNSEL from EXPERIENCE

8. I will instruct thee and teach thee.—Some have ascribed this language to the Lord; but it is David who speaks, anxious from his own experience to warn others. He holds the young and inexperienced in mind; **With mine eyes upon thee,** he says, "I will give thee counsel." And his counsel here really is that they shall be ready to *receive* counsel. **Be not as the horse, or as the mule.**—He points to irrational animals, which are led by instinct and appetite, and which, being devoid of reason, must be guided by force if guided at all. "Consider the causes why a broken leg is incurable in a horse, and easily curable in a man. The horse it incapable of counsel to submit himself to the farrier; and therefore in case his leg be set he flings, flounces, and flies out, unjointing it again by his misemployed mettle, counting all binding to be shackles and fetters unto him; whereas a man willingly resigns himself to be ordered of the surgeon, preferring rather to be a prisoner for some days than a cripple for life. Be instructed of others, and go not to the pains of learning all things by thy own experience" (*Fuller*).

10, 11. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.—David spoke from his own history; and he had lived long enough to learn the lesson from other's lives, too. The truth is, and it needs to be read among all the shams and deceits, and hollow pretenses, and mistaken delights of this our day, that there is no real joy, no life that does not end in wretchedness, unless, in all the meaning of the words, it is pure, and honest, and just, and compassionate. When one trusts in God, he trusts not in himself, and leans not on a broken reed. **Be glad in the Lord and rejoice.**—It is a good sign when one lives in true joy. One who with a pure heart and holy purpose lives in the presence of God, ought to rejoice. When the great composer Haydn was asked why his church music was all so cheerful, he said: "I can not make it otherwise, I write according to the thoughts I feel; when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit."

THE PSALMIST—CONFESSION.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Sin Brings Suffering. 1 4. Who does David say is blessed? Had David any sin to be covered? Do we differ from him in this? How fully does he indicate that the sinner may be justified? What had his condition been while silent with regard to this? How had the Lord's presence been with him? **2. Confession Brings Forgiveness.** 5-7. Through whom had the enormity of his sin been shown him? To whom did he acknowledge it? How did the Lord receive his confession? When shall the godly pray for this? May the time come when they can not come nigh him? What will God be to those who have found him? What will he do for them? **3. Experience Brings Wisdom.** 8-11. How shall others be taught? What disposition must they not have? What shall be the portion of the wicked? Of him that trusteth in the Lord? What feeling should the righteous have? How would the Psalmist express his joy?

COLLECT.

O God, we come to thee to-day with all our sins and our sorrows, our wants and our weaknesses, our trials and temptations, our doubts and our fears. Give us the peace which comes from the utter humbling of ourselves, and from the meek and due confession of every secret sin. Comfort and heal our hearts, so sadly marred and wounded. Deliver our eyes from tears, our feet from falling, our souls from death. In the beauty of thy holiness lead us on until, in some fair day, our sad wanderings shall be forgotten, and the pain of them shall cease; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

IN THE FLOOD OF GREAT WATERS.

"Not to be freed from the scourging,
Though faint when the smitings began,
But save me dear Lord from the surging
Of the terrible sea of my sin!
I sink in a grief unavailing,
I reach in the dark for thy hand,
It guides—while my last strength is failing—
To a Rock in the treacherous sand.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. SIN AND SORROW.—1. *The Royal Singer.*—David, a soul inspired by divine music and much other heroism, was wont to pour himself forth in song; he, with seer's eye and heart, discerned the God-like among the human, struck tones that were an echo of the sphere-harmonies, and are still felt to be such. Reader, art thou one of a thousand, able still to read a Psalm of David, and catch some echo of it through the old dim centuries; feeling far off, in thy own heart, what it was once to other hearts made as thine (*Carlyle*).

2. *The Royal Sinner.*—The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none. . . . Unbelievers sneer and ask, "Is this your man according to God's heart?" The sneer, I must say seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults, what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it—the remorse, temptations, true, often-baffled, never-ending struggle of it—be forgotten? . . . David's life and history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblems ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul toward what is good and best. . . . Is not a man's walking in truth always that—"a succession of falls"? Man can do no other. In this wild element of a life, he has to struggle upward; now fallen, now abased; and ever with tears, repentance, and bleeding heart, he has to rise again, struggle onward, still onward. That his struggle be a faithful, unconquerable one, that is the question of questions (*Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship"*).

3. *The Great Forgiver.*—An English criminal, notorious for the greatness of his crimes, was sentenced to be executed. While in prison he became thoroughly convinced of the enormity of his sins. He found pardon, and his heart was so filled with the love of God that he cried out continually, "He is a great forgiver! He is a great forgiver!" He that hath light thoughts of sin, never had great thoughts of God (*Dr. Owens*). "Make a journey every day to three mountains. Go to Sinai, and see your sins; go to Calvary, and behold the Lamb of God; go to Zion, and view the heavenly city." 'T is one thing to have our sins worn away from the memory, and quite another thing to have them washed away at the gospel fountain (*A. Fuller*).

4. *Sin Brings Sorrow.*—Everything about David was intense; and hence, when he sinned, he did it in such a way as to make well nigh the most hardened shudder. A man of this nature ought to be more peculiarly on his guard than other men. The express train, dashing along at furious speed, will do more mischief if it runs off the line than the slow-going horse car. Everyone understands that; but everyone demands, in consequence, that the driver of the one shall be proportionately more watchful than that of the other (*Taylor*). As his sin was great, so his repentance was bitter, and his suffering from all its consequences severe. Though he still rejoices in forgiveness, "the elasticity and bound of his character are seen no more." Says Kitto: "Alas! for him, the bird which once rose to heights unattained before by mortal wing, filling the air with its joyful songs, now lies, with maimed wing, upon the ground, pouring forth its doleful cries to God.

"The bird with the broken pinion
Kept another from the snare,
And the life that sin had stricken
Raised another from despair;

"Each loss has its own compensation,
There is healing for every pain,
But the bird with the broken pinion
Never soared so high again."

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND PARDON.—1. In the old English story of King Alfred and the cakes, the peasant's wife feels no compunction for abuse of the supposed poor wanderer who had unwittingly allowed her cakes to burn. Her conscience in no way smites her for her ill temper and want of courtesy, until she finds out whom she has offended. This alters the case, and fills her with horror and distress. King David saw that he had sinned, not merely against his own subjects, but against his God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned" (Ps. li.). This was what made the matter so terrible. God had marked the sin. God was displeased at it (*S. S. Journal*).

2. *Conscience Satisfied.*—When a sin is committed it makes a stain on the conscience, and the stain burns. This pain is the hint of nature to seek the removal of the sin.

NATHAN BEFORE DAVID.

Can this defilement be removed? It is a question which conscience itself can not answer. Conscience may be compared to a stern guide, who gives a lantern to a cripple and orders him to go the way the light reveals on pain of death; but it has no concern for his pitiful inability to surmount the difficult path. Though conscience does not know the way to reconciliation, yet it wanders restless and excited till it catches sight of Calvary, when its eye kindles like that of the exile who sees on the horizon the cliffs of his native land; and when it reaches the cross it pitches its tent there forever (*Stalker*).

3. *Glad in the Lord.*—An ancient Persian song says: "If the heavens were a bow, the earth its string, the lightning the arrow, and you were its target, what would you do?" And the next verse answers: "I would seek the bosom of the archer." Man's only hope is in the loving kindness of the heart of God.

ALL LEADS TO LASTING SIN SUFFERING AND SORROW **TRUE RESULTS IN YOUR** REPENTANCE RENEWAL AND RESTORATION

GOLDEN TEXT.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
—Ex. xx. 12.

LESSON VIII. AUGUST 23.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

II. Samuel xv. 1-12.

Time.—About B. C. 1023, some twelve years after the scenes of the last lesson—David's fall. The king was now about sixty-two years old, and had reigned twenty-five years at Jerusalem. **Places.**—Jerusalem; and Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

Connecting History.—In the twelve years passed over in silence, David has been growing old. It would be surprising if between early privations, and later indulgences, he did not age early. Everything would indicate that his repentance had been genuine and lasting, and that his life was chastened and pure. But the evils flowing from his own misdoings fall upon him. Solomon, now about ten years old, is a hope and comfort to him; but his multiplied marriages are a source of jealousy and strife without end.

The Character of Absalom.—The character and career of Absalom have often been too harshly judged, and full allowance has not been made for sharp trials and perplexities that fronted his life. He was the son of Maacah, a daughter of the king of Geshur (a little kingdom northeast of Palestine), and doubtless inherited some of the wild and haughty spirit of his mother's family. We can not judge him harshly for killing his half brother, Amnon, who had so foully wronged his full sister, Tamar. Under the law of Moses, Amnon's life was forfeit; and according to the eastern code of honor it was Absalom's duty to avenge his sister's wrong. Fleeing to the court of his grandfather to save his life, he remained for three years in banishment; and when he returned, for two years—until the condition became intolerable to him, he was not permitted to see his father's face. Moreover, he was now the eldest living son, and the natural heir to the throne; but with Bathsheba holding first place in the king's favor, he knew no throne awaited him, and that life itself would be intolerable, if it were not more than uncertain. One fate was commonly inevitable to any prince who had a prominent claim to an eastern throne.

It was to David's honor that he mourned over Absalom as he did, for back of all the young man's ambitious misdeeds, lay his own transgressions.

1 And it came to pass after this, that Ab'sa-lom prepared him chariots a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Ab'sa-lŏm rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy suit which came should come to the king for judgment, judgement, then Ab'sa-

I. A PLOT AGAINST THE KING.

EXPLANATORY.

1. It came to pass after this. After the three years of enforced absence in Geshur and the two years' prohibition from the face of his father. **Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses.**—David was an exceedingly indulgent parent. He now gave his son opportunity for a dangerous extravagance and display. The chariots and horses, and the runners who dashed ahead as royal guards or heralds, were not for war, but merely for parade and show. The pomp and show of royalty usually pleases a subject people; and Absalom put on, with his father's consent, such regal airs as prepared the way for larger claims and assumptions.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Aug. 17. — A Sister Avenged II. Sam. xiii. 23-39).
Tuesday, Aug. 18.—Plea of the Woman of Tekoa for Absalom (II. Sam. xiv. 1-17).
Wednesday, Aug. 19.—Absalom Restored (II. Sam. xiv. 18-33).
Thursday, Aug. 20.—Absalom's Rebellion (II. Sam. xv. 1-12).
Friday, Aug. 21.—David's Lament Over the Conspiracy (Ps. lv. 1-23).
Saturday, Aug. 22.—Retroactive Duties (Eph. vi. 1-9).
Sunday, Aug. 23.—Hope Thou in God (Ps. xlii. 1-11).

lŏm called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Is'ra-el.

3 And Ab'sa-lŏm said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

4 Ab'sa-lŏm said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

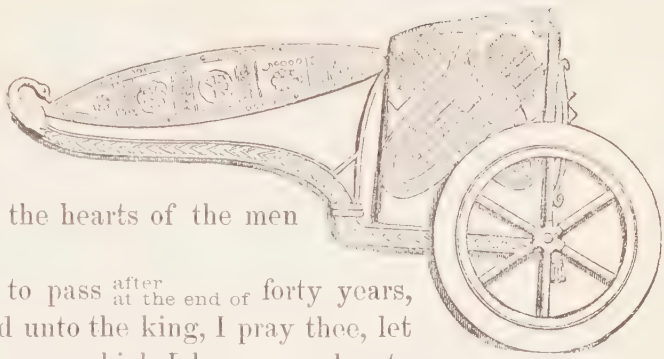
GATE OF AN EASTERN CITY.

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him.

2. Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate.—The gate of an eastern city was a common place for gathering news, transacting business, and even for administering justice. At this point, as an adroit and unscrupulous politician, Absalom in the early morning habitually posted himself. He mixed with the people, showed interest in them, and effectually ingratiated himself. **When any man had a suit which should come to the king.**—The tribes had local courts where minor cases were decided and disposed of, but weightier matters could be appealed to the king. It is quite likely that in his advancing years, with the great growth of his kingdom—and hence of important legal controversies, the administration of justice may have been seriously delayed. The suitors in such cases would be deeply influenced by Absalom's apparent interest.

3, 4. Thy matters are good and right.—It is so easy to promise, when it is well understood that one has no power to fulfill! Here is the field of the demagogue; here is where the "outs" always have the advantage of the "ins" in politics,—it is so easy to assure every disaffected man that a change will be to his interest. **There is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.**—The king could not hear all cases in person, but it was his business to appoint suitable judges who should hear. Absalom accuses him of not doing this; and perhaps with good reason, for cases had arisen in his own household which would make him fear a full and free administration of justice. **Oh that I were made judge.**—It is the interests of the dear people, and not the gratification of his own haughty ambition that he is seeking! So he would have it understood; and so he proved himself an unprincipled plotter. So to-day we have men in the medical, the social, the political, and even the religious world, who promise universal cures in defiance of all law. And the misery is that they beguile the hearts of so many followers.

5, 6. When any man came nigh to do him obeisance.—Hardly ever did a man undertake a more difficult task than that of Absalom—the wrenching of the scepter from the mighty David; and hardly ever did one who missed, come nearer of success. That he had some remarkable ability must be admitted. 1. Riding in kingly display through the realm, he kept himself in a striking and imposing way before the people. 2. Taking advantage of the mistakes and misfortunes of the king, he spread a broad and deep defection. 3. He did not coldly accept the homage of men, but pressed his friends like equals to his heart. He showed a warm and approachable spirit; and men can not be kept from loving the man who they think loves them. There were various elements which tended to loosen David's hold upon the people; but it still is



CHARIOT.

6 And on this manner did Ab'sa-lŏm to all Is'ra-el that came to the king for judgment: judgement: so Ab'sa-lŏm stole the hearts of the men of Is'ra-el.

7 And it came to pass after at the end of forty years, that Ab'sa-lŏm said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hē'bron.

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Gē'shŭr in Syr'ĭ-a, saying, If the LORD shall indeed bring me again indeed to Je-ru'sa-lĕm, then I will serve the LORD.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hē'bron.

10 But Ab'sa-lŏm sent spies throughout all the tribes of Is-ra-el, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Ab'sa-lŏm reigneth is king in Hē'bron.

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remarkable that from him Absalom should so extensively have stolen the hearts of the men of Israel.

II. A GREAT REBELLION.

7, 8. Let me go and pay my vow.—"After forty years" is a clerical error undoubtedly, which it would seem might be corrected. Josephus and some ancient versions read *four* years. This would represent the time employed by Absalom, after his restoration to favor, in laying his plans for revolt. The passage shows how highly religious vows were regarded in that age. While Absalom had been an exile at the house of his grandfather, in the petty kingdom of Geshur, beyond the Jordan, he represents himself as having made a vow that if he could be restored to his home in Jerusalem, he would offer sacrifice to God. Hebron is a fitting place. It was the most sacred spot in Palestine, the home and burial place of the patriarchs, the scene of David's first royalty. Here Absalom was born; and though he has been a long time in remembering his vow, David seems to have had no suspicion of intrigue, but rather appears rejoiced at this evidence of his son's piety.

10, 11. Absalom sent spies.—Secret emissaries who knew where to find his friends and adherents; who could learn, and somewhat lead, public sentiment. **As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet.**—The echoes of a trumpet at Hebron would soon be answered all over the land. Some have thought that a system of trumpet telephoning had been arranged, so that in the same hour the most distant points would be hearing the same shout. **Absalom reigneth at Hebron.**—The deed was not to be prospective, but accomplished. It was not a matter for debate, but as an established fact was to be acted on. **With Absalom went two hundred men.**—These were doubtless men of prominence, and of course were personally friendly to Absalom. The fact that such a number should have gone, utterly unconscious of what was to transpire, shows how carefully plans were laid, and how secretly the plot was managed. In every great revolt there are a few who lead. If the cause is good, the masses are

11 And with Ab'sa-lŏm went two hundred men out of Je-ru'-sa-lem, *that* were called; *that* were invited; and they went in their simplicity; and they knew not any thing.

12 And Ab'sa-lŏm sent for A-hĭth'o-phel the Gī'lon-īte, Dā'vid's counsellor, counsellor, from his city, even Gī'loh, while he offered the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Ab'sa-lŏm.

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inspired by them. If bad, the rank and file are cajoled, compromised, and perhaps committed, before they truly understand the issues. **Absalom sent for Ahithophel.**—This man, the grandfather of Bathsheba, while his interests would all seem to be with David, had plainly become hopelessly estranged from him. Very likely he could never overlook the wrong done to Uriah, and the honor of his granddaughter. He was at the time unequaled in political sagacity, and we may believe, was the soul of the conspiracy. He had gone to his home in Giloh, a half dozen miles north of Hebron, probably to await Absalom's call. **While he offered sacrifices.**—Sacrifices could legally only be offered at the sanctuary, but in the disrupted service of the tabernacle the law had been departed from. So, in a great sacrificial feast, the participants would be bound together, and the great enterprise begun. **The conspiracy was strong.**—David had done much to win the regard of his people; he must have done much thus to lose it. Perhaps very many expected a bloodless revolution, desiring only to compel David to abdicate in favor of his son, and thinking it should be no great hardship for the aged king to see the crown upon the fair head of him who was his natural heir.

13, 14. There came a messenger to David.—It speaks well for David's heart that he had no suspicion of the conspiracy, and was taken wholly unawares. It was a sad and bitter awakening. **Arise, let us flee.**—He is David the chastened now. He does not fly from cowardice, but from prudence and submissiveness. He felt at the moment that he knew not whom to trust, his nearest friends had forsaken him. He probably might have made some defense of Jerusalem, but he dreaded the horrors of bloodshed, and the devastation of his loved city. In time of peace he had no considerable standing army. And he doubtless felt that delay, which would permit the sober second thought of the nation to come into play, would work to his advantage. Even in his flight he showed himself kingly. He showed the extreme of grief and humility; he made no threats, and was gentle in his reproaches. But he made no compromise, and surrendered nothing. Old and broken, sorely smitten, with all his frailties, he was God's anointed still.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Preparation. 1-6 What did Absalom prepare for the sake of a princely appearance? Where would he take his place early in the morning? For what purpose would men seek the king here? What would Absalom ask those who came? When he had answered what would Absolom say in criticism of the king's acts? What wish would he express? How did he say he would judge their causes? How did he greet those who came? What effect did all this have on the people? **2. The Pretense.** 7-9. What did Absalom ask of his father? Where had Absalom been living for some time? What vow did he say he had made while there? What had been the cause of his absence? What did David say in answer to his request? **3. The Conspiracy.** 10-12. Whom did Absalom send through the tribes? What announcement were they to make? What was to be the sign? Who went with him from Jerusalem? Did they know his purpose? For whom did Absalom send? How did the people receive the conspiracy?

COLLECT.

Show us, O God, the misery that ever comes from being untrue to our human relationships; and the sorrow that ever ends the life given up to selfish pride, and cruel ambition. Teach us the better way; and as we live unselfishly for others, may we prove that toil is rest, and loss is gain, and failure victory; in Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A FALSE PRINCE.—1. *A Misunderstanding.*—During the years of Absalom's alienation from his father, David's heart had been going out to him continually. Perhaps, had the son felt this, he would have been more loyal; but the king's external coldness widened the breach between them. We must not expect a just judgment from men if we hide our true selves.

2. *Ambition and Pride.*—Did he know that the boy Solomon was the destined heir to the throne? Perhaps so, but he saw no meaning in the terrible death of those who before had sought to alter God's appointment. His the throne must be, and now. Men liked things which pleased the eye, and he surrounded himself with princely luxury and pomp. There was a royal mule which David rode, but Absalom owns horses, and chariots. The right view of the responsibilities of a lofty position make one humble who is truly fit for it, but self-seeking ambition cares not for his fitness for the place, but the fitness of the place to bring him honor.

3. *Fair but False.*—There are cities, such as Lisbon and Constantinople, which when viewed from the sea, present the most enchanting appearance, and with their terraces, fine buildings, and luxuriant groves, standing out in the clear atmosphere, with the bright blue encircling them above and beneath, and the sun lighting them up with a golden glory, look like glimpses of fairy land. But when the traveler disembarks and actually enters the city, the illusion is dispelled. Not that the sun is less bright, or that the blue sky fades, but they shed their radiance upon filthy streets and unsightliness of all kinds. As attractive as was the first view, so repellant is the reality. Look at Absalom. Beautiful in person, magnificent in his surroundings, noble in his bearing, courteous in his manners, no wonder that men's hearts were won to him, but instead of his memory being held in esteem, it is loathed and despised by his nation to this day, for the black reality which lay under this fair and promising exterior. Do not trust the appearance of another; do not trust your own, though well regarded by others (*Stock*).

4. *Traitor to King and People.*—(1) Bad as all unkind criticism is, the most despicable and harmful is that which hides itself under a show of generosity. How often may a flowery eulogy be poisoned by the sting which is half concealed in it. It is easier to criticize than to act so as to avoid criticism. (2) Do not trust too readily the one who always says, "You are right." He is not fit to be a judge who pronounces hastily upon hearing one side of the case. "The most dangerous of tame beasts," says Socrates, "is the flatterer."

II. A FALSE WORSHIPER.—1. *Early Influences.*—The training of a heathen mother and the lack of training of a too indulgent father had left Absalom with no true religious principles. Professor Webster was convicted of the murder of Dr. Parkman, of Boston. He confessed, but said: "I am irritable and passionate. I was an only child, much indulged, and never acquired the control over my temper which I should have learned early, and the consequence is all this."

2. *The Pretext.*—Absalom did not hesitate at murder, and now has no scruple which can keep him from the sacrilege of making religion "a cloak for his treachery." Even supposing the vow had been a real one, it has not the form of a sincere one, for a man who has the right view of God will not make his service dependent upon an "if."

3. *The Beginning of the End.*—When the morning sun is bright the little river boat sails out to sea. The fair wind fills her sails, the favorable tide rolls onward in her course, the parted sea makes way for her to glide swiftly and merrily on her happy voyage; but having thus been her servants and carried her whither she would, these soon become her masters and carry her whither she would not. The breeze that swelled her sails has become a storm, and rends them; the waves that quietly rippled for her pleasure, now rise in fury and dash over her for her destruction; and the vessel which rode in the morning as a queen upon the waters sinks before night comes on, the slave of those very winds and waves which had beguiled her to use them as her servants. So it is with sin (*Morse*). Absalom is putting in motion, and entrusting himself to forces too strong for his control.

III. A FALSE SON.—1. *A Sufficient Cause.*—A building in India suddenly fell, and it was found that the supports had been eaten through and honeycombed by a small worm. So David's throne suddenly tottered, but the germ of destruction had been long growing (*S. S. Journal*). Even the adherence of Ahithophel to Absalom, and the great strength he, as David's trusted counselor, would bring, may be traced directly to the wrong David had done to his family, since Bathsheba was his granddaughter.

2. *Be Wise as Serpents.*—It is no new thing for very good men, and very good things, to be made use of by designing men to put a color upon bad practices. When religion is made a stalking horse, and sacrifice a shoeing-horn, to sedition and usurpation, it is not to be wondered at if some that were well affected to religion, as these two hundred followers of Absalom, are imposed upon by the fallacy, and drawn in to give countenance to that, which in their heart they abhor, not having known the depths of Satan (*Henry*).

3. *A Strengthening Evil.*—The voice of the people was, over and over in the case of Israel, proved to be not the voice of God. The popular mind is only too easily misled, but Oriental impulsiveness in particular is illustrated by the strong following which the False Prophet gained in the Soudan a few years ago.

4. *A Thankless Child.*—It is sad to have an enemy in one who has been formerly a friend; but that he whom we have fondled in our arms and nestled in our bosom, and whose first lisping utterances have been in the attempt to call us father, should live to be at deadly feud with us, and attempt our destruction—this is misery indeed.

"So the struck eagle stretched upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,
And winged the shaft that quivered in his heart."

LYING—ABOUT HIS PLANS
STEALING—THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE
REBELLING—AGAINST HIS OWN FATHER

SHIMEI CURSING DAVID.

LESSON IX. AUGUST 30.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.
—Ps. i. 6.

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT AND DEATH.

II. Samuel xviii. 9-17, 32, 33.

Time.—About three months after the last lesson, B. C. 1023. **Places.**—Mahanaim, a well fortified city eastward of the Jordan; and the "woods of Ephraim," within a day's march of it.

Geographical Notes.—Hebron, where Absalom assembled his army of conspirators, was only twenty miles from Jerusalem. He could march to Jerusalem in a single day, and as David had no time to assemble an army, and was uncertain how many of the people would respond to his call, he had no alternative but either to abandon the city, or be shut up within its walls, and compelled soon or late to surrender. He chose the former, with the hope that friends would rally to him if they could. Wishing to place the river Jordan between himself and his pursuers, he hastened to cross it, and having some warm friends about Mahanaim, made warmer by his recent kindness to Mephibosheth, he marched thither. This was near the northeastern extremity of the country beyond the Jordan. Here he soon rallied a small army, and awaited Absalom, who was not slow to pursue him. The battle was fought in a forest called the "forest of Ephraim," though it was located in the territory of Manasseh (verse 6). It was probably David's generals, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, who chose the field; for it gave a small army the advantage in fighting against a large one. Many of the oaks of Palestine, especially the variety called the terebinth, send out their branches within a few feet of the ground, and their tips often touch the ground. The limbs are very thick and very stiff. It would be impossible for a man riding a mule to keep the saddle if the mule should run under one of these trees, as Absalom's mule did; and it would be impossible for a rider to prevent his mule from doing this, if the latter was either badly frightened by the noise of the battle, or had a few arrows sticking in his sides. This fully accounts for Absalom's fate.

SYRIAN OAK.

Connecting History.—David's Flight.—At first the king had no plan except to escape from Jerusalem, toward which he knew Absalom was now marching with a host of enthusiastic followers. As he gathered his household in the valley of Kidron, east of the city, he must have found comfort in the friends who gathered round him, and prepared to share his fate.

> Ah, friendship in adversity is sweet!
> And tenfold precious are the friends who bide
> When storms have swept the unfixed all away.

The great commanders; and the veteran six hundred—that rare body that led the way to all his victories; the priesthood,—and, indeed, the hearts of all the good and sober, went out with him. The conduct of Ittai, a chief commander in the six hundred, showed that Philistine blood might be true and heroic; and Hushai's fidelity taught that honest statecraft was not wholly gone with the wild rush of popular enthusiasm.

Absalom Occupies Jerusalem.—In a little space after the king's train disappeared, amid the tears and lamentation of the people, Absalom entered the city, welcomed with every manifestation of delight. He took possession of the royal palace, and was hailed as king. David was now near destruction. Ahithophel

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Aug. 24. — David's Flight from Jerusalem (II. Sam. xv. 13-26).
Tuesday, Aug. 25.—Three Strong Friends Left in Jerusalem (II. Sam. xv. 27-37).
Wednesday, Aug. 26.—David is Cursed (II. Sam. xvi. 1-18).
Thursday, Aug. 27. — Ahithophel's Counsel Defeated (II. Sam. xiv. 1-14).
Friday, Aug. 28.—David Crosses the Jordan (II. Sam. xvii. 15-29).
Saturday, Aug. 29.—Defeat and Death of Absalom (II. Sam. xviii. 1-17).
Sunday, Aug. 30.—Psalms from the Fugitive Days (Ps. iii. and iv.).

asked the privilege of leading twelve hundred men against him at once, being justly confident that he could seize and destroy him with little bloodshed, and so end the struggle. His counsel was only defeated by the skillful plea of Hushai; and Ahithophel, feeling that a fatal mistake was made, and the rebellion would end in disaster, returned to his home to commit suicide. David hastened across the Jordan and came to Mahanaim, the frontier capital of Ishbosheth. The people of that region gave him welcome, and supplied his needs; for the present he was safe.

Campaign and Battle.—For three months Absalom busied himself in gathering an army. West of the Jordan—where lay by far the largest part of the national strength—the realm was wholly in his hands. He might now have made his rule firm by fulfilling his promise; and leaving David to himself, have acted only on the defensive. But by his conduct, especially in dishonoring his father's superfluous household left behind, he had made any reconciliation impossible; and strife was soon or late inevitable. Placing Amasa, a nephew of David, a tried and capable leader, in command, he advanced with an army apparently overwhelming, direct toward Mahanaim. Meanwhile David had gathered strength, and with something of his old fire had prepared to defend himself. His army in three divisions, under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, was advanced to a favorable position some miles in front of Mahanaim. We can not know the details of the battle; but it seems likely that while the great hosts of Absalom were carelessly advancing, broken and confused from the exceeding wildness and roughness of the region, they were unexpectedly and vehemently assailed by the well-trained divisions of David. The battle would end almost as soon as begun; and in the flight which covered a wide region, and which from strong pursuit and well trained assaults, gathered terror as it went, more perished in being crowded into dark chasms or precipitous ravines, than were devoured by the sword. In a few hours the great army was in hopeless wreck, and twenty thousand men were dead or dying.

9 And Ab'sa-lŏm met / chanced to meet the servants of Dā'vid. And Ab'sa-lŏm rode upon a / his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was / was under him went away / on.

EXPLANATORY.

I. REGARDS THE KING'S WISHES.

9. Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David.—Absalom was riding his mule, evidently unprepared for battle. The chariot and horses, with fifty men as his bodyguard, used by him in display at Jerusalem, were nowhere near him now. Chariots, of course, would have been useless on such rough ground, but Absalom would have had a picked body of men around him if he had thought to go into battle; and mules were only for use on the march, and were sent to the rear when fighting began. But the last thing that Absalom expected was that he would be attacked on the march. He was advancing with an army infinitely more numerous than David's, and he assumed that David would wait at Mahanaim; and, if he fought at all, would fight under its walls. In this over-confidence he was riding well in advance of his army, which was struggling on over most difficult ground (*P. C.*). Rising as the country does suddenly from the deep valley of the Jordan it is naturally deeply furrowed by the rapid streams which drain it; and our ride was up and down concealed glens which we only perceived when on their brink, and mounting from which on the other side, a short canter soon brought us to the next (*Tristram*). **The mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak.**—Recognizing the danger to himself and his army Absalom turned backward. Perhaps for safety, and to conceal himself, he turned toward a densely wooded ravine. In his haste, and perhaps the fright of his mule, he rode under the harsh and tangled branches of the oak or terebinth. He must have been rushed into this deadly net-work with force. He was very likely

10 And a certain man saw *it*, and told Jō'ăb, and said, Behold, I saw Ab'sa-lŏm hanged in an oak.

11 And Jō'ăb said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.

12 And the man said unto Jō'ăb, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and A-bĭsh'ă-ī and It'ta-ī, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Ab'sa-lŏm.

13 Otherwise if I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.

14 Then said Jō'ăb, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Ab'sa-lŏm, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Jō'ăb's armour compassed about and smote Ab'sa-lŏm, and slew him.

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stunned; at any rate, he was seriously injured and helpless; the mule rushed on, and he was left at the mercy of his enemies.

10, 11. A certain man saw it, and told Joab.—One of David's soldiers. He may have seen the sudden turn of the mule, and seeing fit to follow the track, had come upon Absalom. It was important that Joab should be told, for it was all important to secure such a captive. **Why didst thou not smite him?**—It is Joab who speaks. He indicates at once how much he proposes to respect the king's wishes. The relation of Joab to the king is one of the mysteries of David's reign. Again and again in defiance of his commands, and against his deepest wishes and interests, did this brave and unmatched commander, and conscienceless man, execute his own designs. He held, all through his reign, a place which the king could not break or shake. His shadow stalked around the throne. Sometimes indispensable, he was always to David a terrible necessity. **I would have given thee ten pieces of silver, and a girdle.**—He would have rewarded him for that time richly. Ten pieces of silver would mean ten shekels of silver; the girdle was an important and a most distinguishing article of dress.

12, 13. Though I should receive a thousand pieces.—The reply of the soldier shows how plainly and earnestly David had given the command to spare Absalom. All the soldiers, as well as the commanders, understood it. The man in the ranks was used to obeying orders, and regarded in the heat of strife the wishes of the king. He moreover shows a knowledge of Joab's crafty and selfish character. "If I had killed Absalom," he says, "it would have been tracked out. I would have been condemned for the act; and you yourself would have indorsed my execution."

IL REGARDS HIS OWN DESIRES

14, 15. I may not tarry thus with thee.—Joab has no time to waste; he doesn't care to contradict the soldier. He knows one man who can kill Absalom without fear of being called to account. He takes three short spears, and hurrying to the tree where the helpless prince is hanging, he thrusts them through his body. "The heart" here signifies the middle of the body. Joab's body-guard finish the ghastly deed.

16 And Jō'ăb blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Is'ra-el: for Jō'ăb held back the people.

17 And they took Ab'sa-lŏm, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Is'ra-el fled every one to his tent.

. . . . . .

32 And the king said unto Cush'i, Is the Cush'ite, Is it well with the young man Ab'sa-lŏm? safe? And Cush'i the Cush'ite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Ab'sa-lŏm, my son, my son Ab'sa-lŏm! would God I had died for thee, O Ab'sa-lŏm, my son, my son!

16, 17. Joab blew the trumpet.—There was no occasion for further slaughter; the battle was decided; and more, the strife with Absalom was forever ended; there was but one king in Israel. The sooner that bloodshed ceased now, the better for all parties. **They took Absalom and cast him into the great pit.**—In some striking depression near at hand. This was his grave; and into this the returning soldiery cast stones.

18. Absalom in his life time had taken and reared for himself the pillar.—Three sons were born to Absalom (chapter xiv. 27), but they were dead. Perhaps this monument was over their graves; and feeling he would leave no heir, he strove to write his name in marble for the world to read. This memorial stood, according to Josephus, two furlongs outside Jerusalem. Its location is not now known. That which is to-day called Absalom's tomb is of Roman origin.

32. Is it well with the young man Absalom?—The scene now shifts to Mahanaim, where the aged king sits between the gates that he may speedily greet any messenger from the battlefield. One messenger arrives and announces victory; but David is not yet satisfied; he asks a question which the young man does not answer. A second runner, the Cushite, arrives, and bowing to the king, proclaims, "The Lord hath avenged thee this day"; but this is not what the king seeks to know. He presses the question upmost in his heart, and gently and courteously comes the answer; but it is plain. Absalom is dead. It is best for David and all Israel that it is so; but that does not take from his grief. His sorrow is hard to cure, for his own misdeeds have largely caused the awful sin, and no less awful judgment, of his wayward son.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Vengeance Delayed. 9-13. Whom did Absalom meet? What happened in his attempt to escape? How was the knowledge of this brought to Joab? What did Joab ask the man? What reward did he say he would have given? Would the man have killed Absalom for this? Why? If he had disobeyed the king would Joab have been likely to defend him? **2. Nevertheless Certain.** 14-17, 32, 33. What did Joab reply? What did he proceed to do? Who joined him in the fatal work? Did they continue the battle longer? What was done with Absalom's body? What did the Israelites do? Who brought the tidings to David? What did David ask? What did the Cushite answer? How was the king affected?

COLLECT.

O Lord, inspire us and strengthen us to do the duties of each day and hour. Save us from the consequences of neglect or misdoing. May we know that true wisdom is very teachable, and true nobility is careful to yield the full measure of obedience. Save us from the dreadful fate that at last overtakes all who defy thy law. May we accept the place thou givest us, and wait thy time to gain our crown. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A SON SPARED.—1. *Fear Increases Danger.*—Had Absalom not attempted to fly, or moved with more caution, he might have escaped the accident which gave opportunity for the vengeance of Joab. It is said of some diseases that extreme fear of them renders one more liable to the contagion, while the nurse or physician, putting fear aside in the discharge of duty, and using proper precaution, is practically safe. "Thou shalt not be afraid," says the Psalmist, "for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day." There is reason for fear in the path of guilt; none in that of duty.

2. *The King's Charge.*—The wish of the king preserved the life of his child from the hand of the soldier, but the time when Absalom might have been saved was long past. A young man convicted of murder was visited in his cell by his mother. "If it had not been for you," he said, "I should never have been here." "I'm sure I never told you to do any harm," she replied. He answered, "I'm sure you never told me to do any good." Perhaps had a different training been his, the prince would not be a defeated rebel hanging between earth and heaven as though rejected by both. Over-indulgence followed by over-harshness make his last merciful purpose vain and leave him to feel

> "That bitterest grief, too deep for tears,
> Of the help that comes too late."

3. *The Curse comes Home.*—Banishment was made a law by Clisthenes, an Athenian, and he was the first to suffer from it. Gryphus, king of Egypt, on coming in from the hunt, was offered by his mother a cup of poison. He had been forewarned, and insisted that she should drink of it first. He plainly told her that he had heard of her intention, and in order to clear herself of such an accusation there was no other way for her but to drink, though she must die soon after (*Foster*). After all is said, man must bear the results of his own sin, and every Absalom who lifts his treacherous hand to smite must himself be the most vital sufferer.

II. A REBEL SLAIN.—1. *Mercy in Severity.*—There are times when a deed of stern justice is the greatest kindness. Branches are pruned away for the welfare of the whole vine or tree. The diseased limb is amputated to save the life of the body from which it was taken. The rebel prince slain, the rebellion is ended, and the command goes forth to spare the rest.

2. *A Sudden Call to Judgment.*—Chosroes, king of Persia, in conversation with two philosophers and his vizier, asked, "What situation of man is most to be deplored?" One of the philosophers maintained that it was old age accompanied by extreme poverty; the other that it was to have the body oppressed by infirmities, the mind worn out, and the heart broken by a heavy series of misfortunes. "I know a condition more to be pitied," said the vizier, "and it is that of him who has passed through life without doing good, and who, unexpectedly surprised by death, is sent to appear before the tribunal of the sovereign Judge" (*Whitecross*).

3. *Remembered by What We Have Done.*—The disobedient son, under the Mosaic law, was to be stoned to death, and in the heap that was added to the original cairn by successive generations of his countrymen as they pronounced curses on his memory, we see a monumental beacon that marks forever the dangerous reef whereon he made shipwreck of his soul (*Taylor*). Mussulman legends represent hell as yawning at the moment of his death beneath the feet of the unhappy prince. The modern Jews, as they pass the monument in the valley of the Kidron, to which they have given his name, have buried its sides deep in the stones which they throw against it in execration. But the sacred writer is moved only to compassion. The thought of that sad death of the childless prince, of the desolate cairn in the forest, instead of the honored grave which he had designed for himself in the king's dale—probably beside his beloved sheep walks on the hills of Ephraim—blots out the remembrance of the treason and rebellion, and every detail is given to enhance the pathos of the scene that follows (*Stanley*).

III. A HOPELESS SORROW.—1. James Stirling, the first temperance missionary in Scotland, was a drunkard till his sixtieth year. He was rescued by the abstinence movement, and devoted the remainder of his life to the work. He had a son who had

DEATH OF ABSALOM.

followed his early example, and was a drunkard. He met him at Aberdeen on one of his journeys, had a long talk, and felt encouraged in regard to him, but the next morning he was hastily summoned. His son had committed suicide. We need not wonder that David's wail burst from him, nor that he added, "Had I been a sober man all my life, this might never have occurred."

2. *What Extreme Grief Forgets.*—(1) Like David, those who cry, "Would I had died for thee," forget that they are rebelling against the will of God; and if the thought that sin of their own has been in part the cause of their grief, makes it harder to bear, it gives them the less ground for rebellion. It has been well said that to command nature we must obey her. (2) They forget that greater good to many should make one a willing martyr. (3) They forget the rich blessings which come even in connection with every loss.

3. *Ties Not to be Broken.*—And the sinner, alas, forgets the sure end of his evil-doing, and the awful pain of it to the hearts that are bound up in his. Did you see the picture, "Breaking the Home Ties"? What was it which put that inexpressible look into the mother's face. Does she fear that her boy will fail to reach the height of earthly success, or is it not rather the longing that he may not fail to keep the simplicity, the purity, the truth, and love of home life which he is leaving. In the memory of those loving home hearts, and in the thought of the greater heart of divine love, may you who are rearing the structures of earthly success so live that though your building fall, they may ask, "Is the young man safe?" and their own consciousness shall answer, "Yes; for the eternal God is his refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms."

A FAITHFUL FRUITFUL FATHER'S COUNSEL CONTROL CRY Too Late

LESSON X. SEPTEMBER 6.

DAVID'S LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.

I. Chron. xxii. 6-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.
—Psa. lxxxiv. 4.

Time.—B. C. 1015. Eight years after the death of Absalom. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

The Book.—The Book of Chronicles (originally one) was apparently compiled in the time of Ezra. In some degree the work is supplemental to the earlier historical books. It drew material from varied authorities, and holds especially to the history of Judah.

Connecting History.—We approach the last scenes in the life of David. Recalled to his throne at Jerusalem, there still remained some spirit of strife, especially a jealousy against Judah, which showed itself in the mad revolt of Sheba the Benjamite. In suppressing this outbreak, Amasa, the late commander of Absalom's forces, who had been restored and placed in command by David, was most foully and brutally murdered by Joab, who could brook no rival.

The chronology of David's sin in the enumeration of Israel, recorded in the last chapter of II. Samuel, is uncertain. Many writers assign it an earlier place in history; but in staying the plague which followed, David offered sacrifice on the top of Moriah, a hill outside the Jerusalem of that day, on a threshing floor which he purchased of Araunah, a Jebusite. On this spot, a few years later, the temple of Solomon was built.

For the greater part, the later years of David would seem peaceful. He held some resentments, and a feeling of unsatisfied justice, as some of his last behests show, but he was still humble, and of mere personal injuries, forgiving. His great thought was to enlarge and beautify the worship of God on earth; his hope, to glorify and enjoy him forever.

6 Then he called for Sŏl'o-mon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Is'ra-el.

7 And Dā'vid said to Sŏl'o-mon [My / his] son, [as / As] for me, it was in my [mind / heart] to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God:

8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not

I. GOD ADVISES HIS SERVANT.

EXPLANATORY.

6. Then he called for Solomon his son.—David had been making large preparations for the building of a temple. The last great thoughts and activities of his life were concerning its construction. After all his sad wanderings, the worship and service of God is uppermost in his heart. He charges Solomon, now recognized as his successor, to complete the work for which he has gathered abundant material. At this time Solomon is some eighteen or twenty years of age.

7, 8. It was in my heart to build.—He looks back to the scene of nearly thirty years ago. He can better understand now, as he looks back over the years, stormy with foreign wars, or broken by internal struggles, that it was never fitly his mission to build a holy and peaceful temple. **Thou hast shed blood abundantly.**—This is not said to condemn David. He lived in

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Aug. 31.—Israel Recalls the King (II. Sam. xix. 9-23).
Tuesday, Sep. 1.—Incidents in the Return (II. Sam. xix. 24-43).
Wednesday, Sept. 2.—David's Love for God's House (The Lesson) (I. Chron. xxii. 1-16).
Thursday, Sept. 3.—The Courts of the Lord (Ps. lxxxiv. 1-12).
Friday, Sept. 4.—Solomon's Counsel (Prov. xx. 18-29).
Saturday, Sept. 5.—Paul's Counsel (Acts xx. 28-38).
Sunday, Sept. 6.—Christ's Counsel (Matt. x. 24-42).

build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight:

9 Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Sŏl'o-mon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Is'ra-el in his days:

10 He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I *will be* his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Is'ra-el for ever.

11 Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath *said of* concerning thee.

12 Only the LORD give thee *wisdom* and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Is'ra-el, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God.

13 Then shalt thou prosper, if thou *takest heed* to *fulfil* the statutes and *judgments* which the LORD charged Mō'ses with concerning Is'ra-el: be strong, and of good courage; *dread* not, nor be dismayed.

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a lawless and barbarous age; he was compelled to fight for his own, and his nation's life; and, sad as it seems, he might be approved for risking his own life bravely, and taking life. But cruel war and peaceful worship did not well unite; and the temple was a type of the church which should be builded by the Prince of Peace.

9, 10. A son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest.—"The work of thy day of storm and strife shall be completed in a day of peace." The son should enjoy the peace which his father had won. **His name shall be Solomon.**—This name signifies "Peace," or "Peaceful"; it indicated the character of his reign. This son was called by the prophet Nathan, *Jedidiah* (Jedid-yah),—"beloved of Jehovah." "David," which came from the same root as "Jedid," signified *beloved*. **I will give you peace and quietness.**—Only by the most sanguinary and destructive strife could this condition so soon have been reached. Israel now numbered about six million souls; no foe threatened or endangered; and the enthusiasm for the renewed service of Jehovah at his tabernacle gave promise of that fidelity which secured perpetual blessing. In this time should God's house be built. While strife and controversy may long be necessary, it is well to remember that the fairest and holiest structures, in outer materials, or in inner character, are built in times of peace.

I will establish the throne of his kingdom.—This does not mean that Solomon will live and reign forever; it does not mean that the kingdom of Israel, as then seen, should always endure; but a certain royalty in this line would never fail. The promise is fulfilled in Christ (Luke i. 32, 33).

II. A FATHER COUNSELS HIS SON.

11. Now, my son, the Lord be with thee.—The aged king is anxious for his son. He realizes that he "is young and tender," and the burdens laid upon him are very great. He realizes, far better than the precocious Solomon, the dangers and difficulties that are before him. The one revealed duty of the young king is to build a house unto God; and of this the aged monarch does not cease to remind him. **Only the Lord gives thee direction.**—There are but two things over which the king is anxious: 1. That God will give him all wisdom needed

14 Now, behold, in my trouble / affliction I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.

15 Moreover there are / there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of men that are / men for every in any cunning manner of work;

16 Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is / there is no number; Arise / arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.

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for his private and personal duties, and for his public responsibilities to Israel. 2. That he may be held faithful to the law and worship of God. **Then shalt thou prosper.**—He lays down the rule for all permanent prosperity. There are certain conditions of healthful growth in all life; and these lie in the right discharge of vital functions, the doing of duty, the keeping of law.

14. Behold in my affliction I have prepared.—In the midst of destructions of foreign wars, and trials and perplexities at home, he had steadily remembered the building of the Lord's house, and had gathered material for it. **An hundred thousand talents of gold.**—Even if the numbers in the text are correct, our knowledge of these more ancient weights and measures is not sufficient to enable us to arrive at any certainty as to those of our present passage (*P. C.*). Estimates vary so widely as to the value of the gold and silver here mentioned, that it is hardly worth while to give figures. One value of the talent would make the amount over four billions of dollars; another, six hundred millions, and yet another, much less still. The amount was doubtless very large, for it was mainly the result of rich conquests; and the accumulation of precious metals by eastern rulers was sometimes almost fabulous. Of brass and iron he had made no reckoning; and timber and stone were being gathered and squared. Workmen were also already provided in abundance, and men who were trained in trades. The father has made everything ready for the service of the son. And now as the "man of peace," who is appointed to build, has come to the throne, David is anxious to see him push on a work which has been to him a longing and an inspiration during all the days of his power.

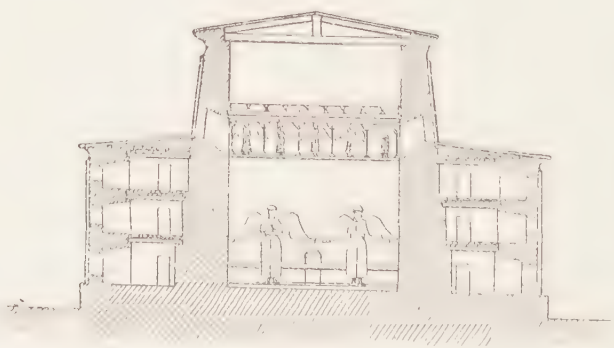
POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Promise to David. 6-11. Who called for Solomon? What did he charge him? What did he tell him of his former purpose? Why did he say he had been forbidden to build the temple? What did God tell him his son should be? What was promised to Israel during the reign of Solomon? What work did God say that he should accomplish? What relationship would God hold to him? How long should his throne be established? **2. The Charge to Solomon.** 11-16. What wish does David now express for his son in the carrying out of this work? What does he desire the Lord to give him? Under what conditions would he prosper? What exhortation does David give him? What does he say he has prepared? What may Solomon do? Who were secured to help in the work? Was there any definite amount of material gathered? What is David's final exhortation?

COLLECT.

Heavenly Father, may thy worship be an ever growing delight to us. May we love the service of thy house,—its sweet communions, solemn vows, its hymns of love and praise. Help us to beautify thy earthly courts, and find our sweetest companionship and comfort there. Take us under the shadow of the everlasting wings, and keep us there, till the storms of life are over. Then we will praise thee ever.

TEMPLE OF SOLOMON, AFTER CANINA.



Section;

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A PROMISE OF THE PAST.—1. *The Lord God of Israel.*—As in many of the towns of Europe the glittering spires of a magnificent cathedral rise above the surrounding buildings and catch the traveler's eye first of all, so was the thought of God in this kingdom of Israel. Though the eyes of the multitude sometimes looked earthward until they forgot the mighty Presence, still there were some like David who kept their hearts fixed and their gaze uplifted to the great purpose of their nation's existence. So in the heart of every man should the thought of God rise above every other purpose, and all its care, all its loyalty center in that thought.

2. *A Duty Transferred.*—A minister relates that his father, in early youth, was impressed with the duty of himself becoming a minister. For some reason he did not follow his impression, but made a vow to devote his oldest son to the ministry, whereupon the feeling of his own duty vanished, although he continued in a sincere and active Christian life. When the son, who tells the incident, was converted twenty years after, he felt that if he accepted the gospel at all he must preach it. After he had prepared himself for the work, his father, for the first time, informed him of his vow, and said: "My son, you have a double duty to do. You have your own work and mine also."

3. *Pure Hands for God's Service.*—Participation in even a necessary evil made David unfit for the building of God's house. So let us keep our hearts pure as we build for eternity. It is said that when St. Paul's Cathedral was being erected, Sir Christopher Wren, hearing that some of the workmen had been guilty of profanity, caused it to be posted about the building that if any should be heard so transgressing, he should be instantly dismissed. Much more important is it that those who are building up the spiritual church should keep themselves above reproach.

4. *A Son Given for a Purpose.*—Augustine was pledged to the Lord by Monica, his mother, from the beginning of his existence. Thomas Collins, the great Methodist preacher, was also early consecrated. When he was first brought to his father, he took him, placed a Bible on his breast, folded his left arm around it, placed a pen in his tiny right hand, and kneeling down prayed God would accept the lad, would make him a faithful witness of that saving word, would help him with tongue and pen to bless his fellows. Bernard was also formally offered to God as an infant, and thenceforth regarded as one set apart unto and to be disciplined for the most arduous service of the great Master (*Coley*).

5. *Opportunity Implies Duty.*—It is very seldom that we are told to stand still and see the salvation of God. The promise should be to us an inspiration to work out its fulfillment. Rest from personal troubles and necessities brings us the opportunity for a more active work of helpfulness to those about us. Can one not see here a purpose of God in taking away some valued thing which was claiming too much of time and thought? Life, when it seems most empty, may be most rich in experience, may become most full of blessing for the world. Greater than the triumphs of earth's mightiest conquerors was the work of the lowly Prince of Peace.

6. *Established Forever.*—"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Luther had this text written in charcoal upon the walls of his chamber, and embroidered upon the dresses of his servants. Amidst all the upheavings of a restless world, and all the errors of a distracted church, the rock of truth remains steadfast forever. The notions of men are constantly changing; the founders of systems pass away, but the "foundation of God standeth sure." The truth, the word, the promise, the covenant of an unchanging God, are as sure as he is faithful (*Bowers*).

II. A FULFILLMENT DRAWING NIGH.—1. *Keep the Law.*—

Be good, my child, and let he who will be clever,
Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long,
And thus make life, death, and that vast forever
One grand sweet song (*Charles Kingsley*).

CEDAR OF LEBANON.

2. *Wealth for God's Service.*—It is not because God needs it that we should give abundantly of our best to him, but because we need to prove our sincerity by giving that which costs something, and because it is the necessary means of presenting his truth to others. Dr. Adam Clarke was preaching to a large congregation in Ireland, and after dwelling in glowing terms on the fact that the gospel could be had "without money and without price," he was somewhat disconcerted at the close by an announcement that a collection would be taken to support the gospel. He afterward related this to the lady at whose house he was staying. "Very true, doctor," replied the hostess, "the water of life is free, but we must pay for pitchers to carry it in."

3. *Improve thy Inheritance.*—Solomon was told, after uncounted treasure of material had been given into his keeping, not simply to use it well, but to add to it. So it is that the world has grown wiser, and accomplished greater things with each passing century. Each generation has taken the legacy of truth handed down from all preceding time, and has added to it as it built up its own history. So if we grow wiser and better we can not simply take what nature and involuntary training have done for us, but throw our whole soul into the search for that which will perfect us in mind, body, and spirit.

4. *Build Thou the House of the Lord.*—What marble so precious as a human soul? What granite so indestructible as an immortal spirit? And it is given to us to work with such valuable and imperishable materials for the adornment of that stately structure which is "built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Let us not loiter at our holy enterprises, but day by day let us labor on with untiring earnestness, until, when evening comes, we shall be greeted with the "well done" of him who is the architect and is to be the inhabitant of the temple itself (*Taylor*).

5. *A Father's Parting Words.*—"The Lord be with thee." A long railway train, crossing the Alleghenies, was rapidly descending a steep curve in a narrow cutting when a little girl and her baby brother were seen on the track ahead. The brakes were applied in vain, but close to the rail, in the upright rock, was a niche from which a piece of rock had been blasted. The baby was thrust into this niche, and as the train thundered by the passengers, holding their breath, heard the voice of the little sister on the other side of the cars ring out, "Cling close to the rock, Johnny; cling close to the rock." And many were the moist eyes that gazed, and many a silent thanksgiving went up to Heaven. A father was on the train with his son, who was coming to an eastern city to live. All the dangers which would harass the son seemed to crowd into the heart of the father, as they stood ready to part. He choked, his eyes filled, and all he could say was, "Cling close to the Rock, Johnny" (*Dr. Todd*).

BEAUTIFY A HEART
BUILD A HOUSE For God

LESSON XI. SEPTEMBER 13.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.
—II. Sam. xxii. 2.

DAVID'S GRATITUDE TO GOD.

II. Samuel xxii. 40-51.

Time.—In the progressive chronology of our lessons we stand near the close of David's life, B. C. 1015. The psalm from which our lesson is taken may have been more lately revised, but it was probably written some thirty years earlier. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Introductory.—The song from which this lesson is taken is found in the Eighteenth Psalm. The Rabbins note seventy-four differences, most of them very minute. It was written in David's earlier years, probably at the close of that great series of victories over Philistines, Moabites, and Syrians, by which his empire was firmly and gloriously established. It has no trace of the clouds of sorrow which covered his later years. It is here inserted because, in the final estimate, it was pleasanter to view David in his best estate, and in the brighter average of his reign.

Hebrew Poetry.—Great as was David as warrior and ruler, he has influenced the world far most by his psalms. They have been models of devotion for all the ages. If sometimes from his fierce strifes a vengeful spirit seems to show in his words, we must remember that he felt himself in all his proper work the agent and the anointed of God. His foes were God's foes. "Do not I hate them that hate thee?" is the constant expression of his impetuous spirit. Oriental poetry is full of figure and lofty imagery. It does not trouble itself with rhymes, nor confine itself to poetic measure. Its rhythm is that of *clauses*. One form is that of *antithesis*, in which two parallel numbers are contrasted in meaning. The book of Proverbs abounds in illustrations of this,—

The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked;
But he blesseth the habitation of the righteous.
Surely he scorneth the scorners;
But he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Another form is that of *synthesis*, where one clause is necessary to complete the sense of another, as,—

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord,
Than great treasure and trouble therewith.
Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith,
Than a house full of feasting with strife.

Still another form is the *synonymous*, where the same general thought is repeated in two or more clauses. The psalms abound in examples of this—,

Let the words of my mouth—and the meditations of my heart,
Be acceptable in thy sight
O Lord—my rock—and my redeemer.

If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost part of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my thoughts;
See if there be any way of wickedness in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Hebrew poetry grants itself great liberty. It combines forms, and descends readily to the freedom of prose, from which it as easily rises, for the oriental mind is at home in poetry.

The old metric versions of the Psalms, which have long been sacredly and exclusively sung by some religious bodies, are often

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Sept. 7. — Delivered from Distress (II. Sam. xxii. 1-19).
Tuesday, Sept. 8.—Brought Into a Large Place (II. Sam. xxii. 20-39).
Wednesday, Sept. 9.—Gratitude to God (II. Sam. xxii. 40-51).
Thursday, Sept. 10.—"That the Gentiles Might Glorify God" (Rom. xv. 1-13).
Friday, Sept. 11.—Rest in the Lord (Ps. xxxvii. 1-17).
Saturday, Sept. 12.—"Unto Thee do I Lift Up My Soul" (Ps. xxv. 1-22).
Sunday, Sept. 13.—"In Thy Presence is Fulness of Joy" (Ps. xvi. 1-11).

painfully deficient in the spirit of the original. The last five verses of the lesson may be taken as a fair example.

God lives, blest be my Rock; the God—of my health praised be.
God doth avenge me, and subdues—the people under me,
He saves me from mine enemies;—yea, thou hast lifted me
Above my foes; and from the man—of vi'lence set me free,
Therefore to thee will I give thanks—the heathen folk among;
And to thy name, O Lord, I will—sing praises in a song.
He great deliverance gives his king;—he mercy doth extend
To David his anointed one,—and his seed without end.

10 For thou hast girded me with strength to (unto the) battle: them (Thou) that rose up against me hast thou subdued under (hast subdued under me those that rose up against) me.

11 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that (made mine enemies turn their backs unto me,) That I might destroy (cut off) them that hate me.

12 They looked, but *there was* (there was) none to save; even (Even) unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

13 Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the *street, and* (streets, and) did spread them abroad.

14 Thou also hast (hast also) delivered me from the strivings of my people; thou (Thou) hast kept me *to be* (to be the) head of the heathen: a (nations: A) people whom I knew (have) not (known) shall serve me.

I. REJOICING OVER VICTORY.

EXPLANATORY.

10, 11. Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle.—The saving grace, in all of David's fierce battles, was the purpose for which they were fought. He was God's servant in all, struggling to build up *his* kingdom, and exalt his law and his worship among men. This sense of high purpose and rectitude, in itself, girded him with strength.

"Thrice is he armed, who hath his quarrel just."

Thou hast subdued.—God had been the great worker, and he, at best, but a frail servant. Every resource he had used, all the power within and without himself, had been given and sustained of God. A force from heaven had pushed back his enemies, and made them flee, and he had been able to execute a just retribution on those who sought his life.

12, 13. They looked, but there was none to save.—He contrasts their condition with his own. Many of his foes were gross idolators, who leaned on monsters of the imagination, and cried into empty darkness for help. And even cries to God may come too late—when judgment has begun.

Ah ye, to whom the door of heaven stands wide,
Ne'er will ye know how blessed are the days,
Until the door be shut!

I did beat them small as the dust of the earth.—After some hard conflicts this was sadly near being literally true. When prisoners (chapter xii. 31) were put "under harrows of iron," they were indeed stamped as mire. Such terrible punishments could only be tolerated on the ground of their *effect*—in terrorizing people who were monsters in crime and cruelty.

14–16. Thou has delivered me from the strivings of my people.—Through all the strifes and jealousies of his own selfish and fickle people, he had been kept. "If

45 Strangers / The strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as / As soon as they hear of me, they shall be obedient unto / obey me.

46 Strangers / The strangers shall fade away, and they / And shall be afraid / come trembling out of their close places.

47 The LORD liveth; and blessed be / be my rock; and / And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation:

48 It is / Even the God that avengeth / executed vengeance for me, and that / And bringeth down the people / peoples under me,

49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: Yea, thou also hast lifted / lift me up on high / above them that rose / rise up against me: thou hast delivered / Thou deliverest me from the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I / nations, And will sing praises unto thy name.

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these words can be explained literally of David, they apply much more naturally to Jesus Christ, who has been delivered from the strivings of the Jewish people; when, after the terrible opposition he had met with on their part, to the establishment of the gospel, he was made the head of the Gentiles; who were a strange people, and whom he had not formerly known or acknowledged, but who nevertheless obeyed him with astonishing readiness as soon as they heard his voice" (*De Sacy*). **The strangers shall fade away.**—At the might of David's name, and without strife, people would submit; and hostile aliens would drift away. Those in castles and strongholds would not try to make defense, but would come forth to submit.

II. REJOICING OVER GOD'S SUPPORT

47–49. The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock.—David has a sure shelter and fortress; it does not shift, and never can be taken. He whose spirit can fly with David's faith to this refuge, never will be overcome by the storms of earth. The same hand that puts down his enemies sustains him. It is ever so. The word that condemns the sinner, is the same that answers the saint.

> The cloud that frowns on foes of God,
> Shine gently on his children.

Under the temporal kingdom of God—the Jewish Theocracy—prosperity and victory were doubly a delight, for they were evidences of God's approval. Under the new dispensation, which deals more exclusively with individual man, the outer marks of approval or disapproval may not be so instant. Indeed—

> From loneliest paths, in the deep dells of sorrow,
> Shall issue God's beloveds, some to-morrow.

Thou deliverest me from the violent man.—He must have had Saul especially in mind. Deliverance in this case was long on the way, but David had faith and fortitude to wait; and reward was proportioned to his fidelity and forbearance.

50, 51. Therefore I will give thanks unto thee.—He would publish far and wide that all the power and glory of his reign were from God. He would sing his praises, a promise which for three thousand years he has been nobly fulfilling. **Great deliverance giveth he to his king.**—He never forgot a lesson that Saul could never learn,—that he was king under God. The main thing with him always was, that he was God's *servant;* whether he played the role of king or not, was comparatively a small matter. In a letter written to the Speaker of the House of Commons from the battle-field of Naseby (June 14, 1625),Cromwell shows the spirit of David: "Sir, this is none other than the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to

51 *He is* the tower of salvation for (Great deliverance giveth he to) his king: and (And) sheweth mercy (loving kindness) to his anointed, (unto To) Dā'vid and to his seed, for evermore.

share with him. The general served you with all faithfulness and honor; and the best commendation I can give him is, that I dare say he attributes all to God, and would rather perish than assume aught to himself." **And sheweth loving kindness.**—David had clasped to his heart God's greater promise. Through all the clouds and storms that gathered, he could see far on a beauteous throne; and he who sat thereon so far surpassed him in might and grandeur, that he called him, though he was his son, his Lord!

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Delivered and Uplifted. 40-46. How was David girded? What had God done to those who rose against him? What opportunity had he given him? Did his enemies find none to save? Will this be true of all who put off seeking for salvation until the day of reckoning shall come? What treatment did David say they had from him? From what had David been delivered? For what was he kept? How should strangers regard him? What should be their fate and feeling? **2. It is the Lord's Doing.** 47-51. How does David here burst forth in praise to God? Who has done all these great things for him? From what violent man had he been delivered? What will David do in acknowledgment of God's mercies? What does he say the Lord is for his king? To whom will he show mercy? How long shall his mercy continue?

COLLECT.

Almighty Father, we thank thee for the trustful and devoted lives of thy servants of old; for the lessons they taught, and for the blessed influence of their fidelity to thee. How kindly thou didst strengthen them! How tenderly thou didst deal even with their frailties and failures! forgiving them, upholding them in hours of weakness, and finally making them more than conquerors! May we, too, be wise by thy wisdom, and strong by thy strength. Give us grace to be followers of those who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises. In Christ. Amen.

PSALM CXLVI.

1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

2 While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

3 Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

5 Happy *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the LORD his God:

6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein *is:* which keepeth truth for ever:

7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:

8 The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

10 The LORD shall reign for ever, *even* thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A SONG OF DAVID.—1. His harp was full stringed, and every angel of joy and sorrow swept over the chords as he passed. . . . God led him the round of all human conditions, that he might catch the spirit proper to every one, and utter it according to truth (*Irving*).

The harp the monarch minstrel swept,
The king of men, the loved of heaven,
Which music hallowed while she wept
O'er tones her heart of hearts had given.

No ear so dull, no soul so cold
That felt not, fired not to the tone,
Till David's lyre grew mightier than his throne (*Byron*).

2. *God is my Rock.*—As dark misery settles down on us, and our refuges of lies fall in pieces one after one; the hearts of men, now at last serious, will turn to refuges of truth. The eternal stars shine out again as soon as it is dark enough (*Carlyle*). On the wall of an Italian palace hang two pictures side by side. One represents a stormy sky overhanging an expanse of boiling waves. The veiling tempest has parted for a moment disclosing a human face in the waves, white and fixed with despair. The other picture has the same scene of terror, but in the midst of the storm rises tall and rugged a rock, which stands unshaken amid the fiercest sweeping of winds or dashing of waves. Our Rock is one which can never be shaken.

3. *And My Fortress.*—Several German princes were extolling the glory of their realms. One boasted of his excellent vineyards, another of his hunting grounds, another of his mines. At last Abelard, Duke of Wurtemberg, took up the subject, and said: "I own that I am a poor prince, and can vie with none of these things; nevertheless I too have a noble jewel in my dominion; for were I without attendants, either in the open country or wild forest, I could ask the first of my subjects whom I met, to stretch himself upon the ground, and confidently place my head upon his bosom and fall asleep without the slightest apprehension of injury." Was not this a precious jewel for a prince? I, however, have something better; for I can rest my head and heart in the lap of God's providence, and upon the bosom of Jesus Christ our Lord, with a perfect assurance that neither man nor devil could touch me there (*Gotthold*).

4. *And My Deliverer.*—A lady once had a dream that she was in a deep and dark pit. Looking upward she saw a star, and as she gazed felt herself ascending. She looked down in surprise, but immediately fell back to the bottom. This was again repeated until she ceased to glance downward, but keeping her eye fixed on the star she rose until she was lifted out of the pit into safety. So if we keep our eye fixed on him who is able to save, we shall be delivered from every depth of evil.

5. *The Appropriating "My."*—In my early boyhood, after hearing a sermon in which the preacher dwelt much on "the appropriating act of faith," I asked my father what he meant. He gave me the same reply which had been given him by his mother to the same inquiry, "Take your Bible and underscore all the 'mys,' the 'mines,' and the 'mes' you come upon, and you will soon discover what appropriation is." It is the focusing of all that God is upon yourself, even as the lens concentrates the sun's rays upon one bright, burning spot (*Taylor*).

II. MERCY.—

1. My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure (*Tennyson*).

2. *How Are Your Sails Set?*—When the crisis of some great agony is upon us, there are no words which leap so readily to our lips as these, "God help me." . . . "The Lord's aye to the fore," said a good Scotchwoman in her day of trial; and by this faith she was upheld (*Taylor*). I stood upon the beach when a strong wind was blowing, and I noticed that some vessels were going one way, and some other vessels were going another way. I said to myself, "How is it that the same wind blows one vessel in one direction, and the other in the other direction." I found out by looking that it was the

different way they had their sails set. So the effect of trouble depends upon the way you have your sails set. All the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans of surging sorrow can not sink a sail that has asked for God's pilotage (*Talmage*).

3. "If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

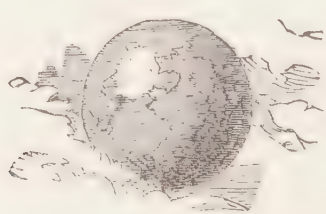
It is a legend that when God poured out his cup of blessings upon man, one remained in the bottom which he purposely kept back. It was *rest*. He would not give man all, lest he should have no need of the giver. So man has ever been tossed by conflicts without and within from which there is no deliverance but in him.

III. GRATITUDE.—1. *The Lord Liveth.*—A certain sense of solitariness grows upon a man as he becomes older. Those who were venerable in his youthful days, and to whom he looked for counsel, are one by one carried to the tomb. The companions of his early manhood fall at his side. He comes at length to a time when he does not care to make many new friends, and when he reaches the limit of three score years and ten, he begins to feel himself a stranger even in the place where he has spent his life. . . . The poet has spoken of "the lonely glory of a throne." Something like this was felt, I doubt not, by David, . . . but there was one always true, and it was with no ordinary emotion, we may be sure, that out of his earthly solitude he sang his fidelity and deathlessness (*Taylor*).

2. *Remember the Giver.*—In the town of Staleybridge, at the close of the cotton famine, occurred an incident that stirred the whole British nation. The close of the war had made it possible for the factories which had been long silent to resume work. As the first consignment of cotton came to town the famine stricken men seized the first wagon, and drew it themselves to one of the factories. It was there surrounded by an immense crowd to whom work meant bread, and as they stood in silent joy, a voice began to sing, "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow." In a moment the words of praise were rising from a multitude of throats, with a fervor such as is rarely known.

3. *A Glimpse of the Eternal.*—Byron, in the "Prisoner of Chillon," tells how Bonnivard, in a moment of longing, climbed the wall of his dungeon to get a look at the mountains of his native Switzerland. He had been confined for years, but one day he heard a bird sing at his prison window, and it stirred in him a desire to look again upon the world, so he dug footholds in the plaster and climbed to the window above. "He saw the mountain unchanged, he saw the snows of a thousand years, and learned patience. That look put new life into him, and gave him a vision that lasted him to the end." So David, making footholds of God's promises, catches a glimpse of the mercy which shall be eternal. And we, too, may see it thus; may know that it is, even when not clear to mortal sight, may find in it a strength which shall last unto the end.

It is JOYOUS JUST to TRUST THANK God in every SORROW SUCCESS



GOLDEN TEXT.
There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. —Prov. xvi. 25.

LESSON XII. SEPTEMBER 20.

DESTRUCTIVE VICES.

Proverbs xvi. 22-33.

Time.—The book of Proverbs is thought to have been gradually collected; from the best days of Solomon, about B. C. 1,000, to the days of King Hezekiah, 300 years later. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Proverbs.—Proverbs are brief and pithy expressions of solid and practical truth. They represent the results of long experience in small compass; they are "the wit of one—the wisdom of many." Geikie says: The Book of Proverbs is the concentrated wisdom of clear and devout intellects looking at religion from the practical side. Its central principle is that goodness is wisdom, and vice and wickedness folly; that, in short, even apart from the sin of evil doing, it is the greatest mistake. The effect of the proverbs in culturing thrift, and the mental and moral tone of a people, can not be doubted. They so express important truths that the mind can grasp and hold them, and hence are constant and effective teachers.

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22 Understanding *is* / is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but / But the instruction / correction of fools *is* / is *their* folly.

23 The heart of the wise teacheth / instructeth his mouth, and / And addeth learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are* / are *as* an honeycomb, sweet / Sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

I. BLEST AND A BLESSING.

EXPLANATORY.

22. Understanding is a wellspring of life.—Every grain in knowledge is an enlargement of the kingdom of the soul. The man of large culture and understanding is not confined by narrow circumstance to few satisfactions and joys; he has resources within himself; he has ever enlarging associations and thoughts and emotions; an ever-flowing spring of refreshment and delight. No two persons live in just the same world. He who has gained most heavenly wisdom, lives in the most beautiful world. **But the correction of fools is their folly.**—They make life small and poor by not yielding to the nobler aspirations; they scourge themselves by yielding in folly to life's lower passions. The strokes that kill the soul are self-inflicted.

23, 24. The heart of the wise instructeth his mouth.—The wise person does not speak until he thinks, and then he shows forth the honest feelings of his heart. His lips are always strictly and truly his servants; and so his words seem to add ever to them grace and learning. Some people are always in servitude and suffering from their tongues; they speak thoughtlessly or from passion; their mouth instructs, or controls, them. **Pleasant words are as an honeycomb.**—The bright fresh clusters of cells holding sweetest honey. Kind words do bring blessing, and the blessing abides—is forever sweet in memory. We say they are easy to speak. Not always. They require: 1. self-control. Our passions, our melancholy and petulant words are not always easy to command. 2. Sympathy. It takes effort sometimes to truly go to the hearts of people, to feel with them; but otherwise our words are empty. 3. Thought. Pleasant words should be more than words. They will soon be unpleasant if there is no food in them.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Sept. 14.—A Soft Answer (Prov. xv. 1-17).
Tuesday, Sept. 15.—Before Honor Goeth Humility (Prov. xv. 18-33).
Wednesday, Sept. 16.—When a Man's Ways Please the Lord (Prov. xvi. 1-21).
Thursday, Sept. 17.—Destructive Vices (Prov. xvi. 22-33).
Friday, Sept. 18.—Whoso Rewardeth Evil for Good (Prov. xvii. 1-13).
Saturday, Sept. 19.—Be of Calm Spirit (Prov. xvii. 14-28).
Sunday, Sept. 20.—The Wisdom of Paul (Rom. xii. 1-12).

25 There is a way that which seemeth right unto a man, but But the end thereof are are the ways of death.

26 He that laboureth The appetite of the labouring man laboureth for himself; for him; For his mouth craveth it of him.

27 An ungodly A worthless man diggeth up evil: and deviseth mischief: And in his lips there is there is as a burning scorching fire.

28 A froward man soweth scattereth abroad strife: and And a whisperer separateth chief friends.

25, 26. There is a way which seemeth right.—This may refer to the blinding effects of passion and self-will; for these make a man think his own way best and desirable. But it seems better to take it as a warning against a preverted or uninstructed conscience. Conscience is a noble monitor, but it needs to be informed by God's word, and ruled by his will to make it a safe guide. When warped by prejudice, weakened and benumbed by disuse and disobedience, judicially blinded in the presence of the pain and penalties of sin, it loses all power of moral judgment and becomes inoperative of good (*P. C.*). "It seemeth right." But things often are not what they seem. A flame seems good to a moth; thin ice, safe to an eager child; the sparkling water, refreshing to one who knows not that the well has been poisoned. The bad social custom appears to be innocent to the slave of fashion. The "pleasant or profitable sin," to the blunt conscience (*Adeney*). **The appetite of the labouring man laboureth for him.**—His mouth demands food which he must supply. 1. At bottom, hunger; the need of bread, is the great sting and goad to all exertion, to useful activity in general. Our value is told by our work, and yet at first we labor only under strong inducement or compulsion. "Hunger sets the dog a-hunting," say the Italians. "The stomach is the teacher of all arts, the parent of invention," says the Latin. 2. So hunger helps us to toil, and thus to develop ourselves. The highest attainments, and the best things done for the world in every department, have been by poor men. "He who wants bread thinks of everything." "He who must swim or drown, will learn to swim." 3. As applied to religion, it is the hunger of the soul which prompts us to seek for righteousness; the emptiness of other joys, which sends us to the sweet comforts of the gospel. Through toil and trouble, the world's unrest and distress only can be overcome. "But better is pain and prayer than the painless torpor of spiritual death" (*P. C.*).

II. WORTHLESS AND HURTFUL.

27, 28. A worthless man deviseth mischief.—It is strange how much mischief a worthless person can sometimes do! A beast may despoil a garden, and a fool burn a palace. The low wit of a vulgar boor may largely destroy the effect of the wisest, and holiest pleading. The sole importance of some men seems to be in their power to breed mischief; in many communities there are people unworthy of the least regard, who exercise a considerable social sway, because their shrewd and unprincipled tongues are so feared. **A froward man scattereth abroad strife.**—A preverse and ungovernable man, who delights to distort truth, who always attributes bad motives, and hence helps to create and publish abroad unlovely and hurtful scandals. Such a man occasions no end of quarrels and heart burnings; and often pursuades himself that he is doing an important and holy work! If your neighbor is doing what deserves criticism or censure, go and speak to him, and speak not of him. **A whisperer separateth chief friends.**—A whisperer is one who tells tales in the dark, a secret slanderer. An old proverb says, "Slanderers are Satan's bellows to blow up contention."

"Low-breathed talkers, dainty lispers, cutting honest throats by whispers" (*Scott*).

An open and vulgar blackguard, and secret tale-bearer, are as unlike as the bold robber, and the secret assassin. The only way we can hold ourselves above the evils of which we speak, is not only to have no malicious thoughts, but actually *to speak evil of no one.*

29 A violent man, or man of violence, enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him
in a into the way that is not good.

30 He that shutteth his eyes, it is to devise froward things:
He that compresseth moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.

31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it shall be found in the
is it way of righteousness.

32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he
He that is is And that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

29, 30. A man of violence enticeth his neighbour.—The man who defies law, wishes as many law-breakers as possible beside him. The man of shameless life, would like so many associates as to break down a pure public sentiment. Here is where great evils tend to perpetuate themselves. The point that practical men should first note with reference to the drink traffic is the almost Satanic ingenuity used to induce men to become habitual drunkards. Saloons are established not merely to *gratify* the appetite of men,—if that were all they would soon die; they are made to *create* appetites. Here is a so-called "industry" that preys upon society and gives nothing of value for what it receives; which really sustains the indolent and the brutal, and that on blood and tears, because men consent to be led by the crafty and unprincipled to lives of servitude and ways of death. **He that shutteth his eyes.**—What a sinister expression when one thus intently revolves an evil upon which he is determined! Note as a whole the activity of the worthless man: 1. It is mischevious in spirit and in end. He sets traps and digs pits; his words blight and scorch. 2. It is contentious; breeding quarrels, separating friends, breaking household. 3. It is the activity of the temper, the seducer. Not content with error himself, he would have partners in sorrow and in guilt. It is thus truly *diabolical*. 4. It is meditated and determined. Very striking is the picture—the eyes half closed, the bit lips, the firm line about the mouth of one resolved on dark designs and their determined execution (*E. Johnson*).

> Ah me! how many perils do enfold
> The righteous man, to make him daily fall,
> Were not that heavenly grace doth him uphold,
> And steadfast truth acquit him out of all (*Spenser*).

III. THE END CROWNS THE LABOR.

31. The hoary head is a crown of glory.—Old age in itself is strong evidence of a just and temperate life. Still mere old age is not venerable in itself. Reverence for years implies a belief that the years have gathered in a harvest of venerable qualities. Old age has its defects, not only in bodily frailty, but in a certain mental stiffening. Thus Lord Bacon says: "Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success;" and Madame De Stael says: "To resist with success the frigidity of old age, one must combine the body, the mind, and the heart; to keep these in parallel vigor one must exercise, study, and love." But, on the other hand, there are inward attainments of a ripe and righteous old age that give to the late autumn a rare flavor which is unknown in the earlier season. There is a "sweet sincerity" at last which can not, in the best, be early found. "Age is not all decay, it is the ripening, the swelling of the fresh life within, that withers and bursts the husk" (*P. C.*).

32. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty.—The man of hot and hasty temper, who does not command himself; the man who is easily irritated, and frets and storms, is not a great man. He who puts on an air of fierceness is usually a coward. A slight water fowl, that greatly agitates a small pond, will not disturb the ocean. A great man is one who has great passions and powers under great command. The struggles within us are hand to hand conflicts, unseen and unpraised of man; but

33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

they are all the more decisive. "Self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control, these three lead on to sovereign power."

33. The lot is cast into the lap.—The Jews sometimes decided important matters religiously by lot; they did not use it on trivial occasions. The proverbist would indicate that the element of chance enters greatly into our lives, and we are bounded by contingencies. Yet God rules. "To pretend that we are not free is to deny our nature, and so to deny him; and it is also a denial of him to think that we can be absolute masters of our fate. Between night and day—truths that are obscure and convictions that are clear—our life is balanced. Life rests on two pillars—the providence of God, and the responsibility of man.

He maketh kings to sit in sovereignty;
He maketh subjects to their power obey;
He pulleth down, he setteth up on high;
He giveth to this, from that he takes away;
For all we have is his; what he will do he may (*Spenser*).

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Wise. 22–26. What is understanding? What is the instruction of fools? From what source do the words of the wise come? Will one who is wise speak thoughtless words? To what are pleasant words compared? What is the end of the way chosen by a perverted judgment? What is man's first incentive to labor? **2. The Evil.** 27–30. Does a worthless man do harm? What does a froward man do? What is a whisperer? What is the result of his work? Is the violent man content with being wicked himself? How is he described as devising evil? **3. The Righteous.** 31–33. When is the hoary head a crown of glory? Who is better than the mighty? Who better than he that taketh a city? What custom of the Jews is referred to by "the lot is cast"? Who overrules this seeming chance?

COLLECT.

O Lord, enable us to trust in thee with all our hearts, and to lean not on our own understandings. In all our ways we acknowledge thee, and do thou direct our paths. May we deeply know that the world apart from thee is evil, and that our place of safety is in thy house, in thy service, with thee. Shape us to thy company, make us pure and loving in thy love. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS.

I. Samuel xxiii. 1-7.

1 Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue.

3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God.

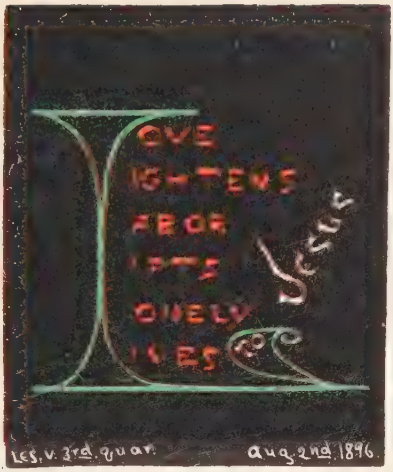
4 And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

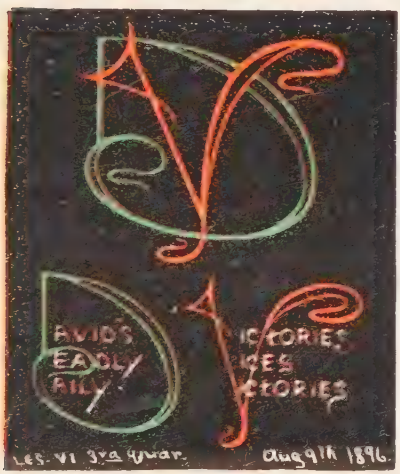
5 Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.

6 But *the sons* of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns thrust away, because they can not be taken with hands:

7 But the man *that* shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same* place.

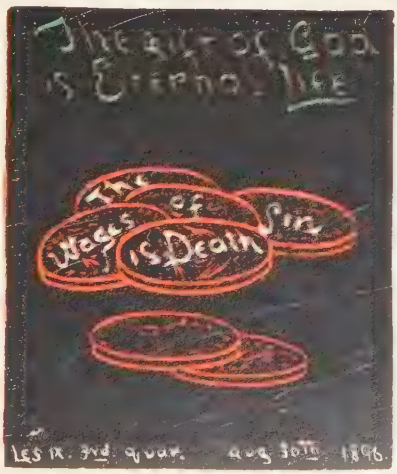
Our King
Temptation
Les. IV. 3rd. quar
July 20th. 1896


Jesus
Les. V. 3rd. quar.
aug. 2nd. 1896


Les. VI 3rd quar.
aug 9th 1896.

Courage
Confess Him Before Men
Les. VII. 3rd. quar.
aug. 16th. 1896.

Les VIII. 3rd quar
aug 23rd 1896


The Gift of God is Eternal Life
The Wages of Sin is Death
Les IX. 3rd. quar.
aug 30th 1896.

Hints for Blackboard Talks.

LESSON V.—THIRD QUARTER.

Love, love, love, love. Charles Spurgeon is credited with saying, "And now let us go on with the love story." God so loved the world (John iii. 16). God taught it through the prophets. He wrote it all over the Bible, and then, when the supreme act of love was consummated, he sent Christ to teach it by word and deed.

Without love Christianity would not live. It could not live, because Christ made it a great part of his teachings, and if love was taken out the gaps would be so large that the story would not be intelligible. Love lightens labor, and lifts lonely lives to Jesus.

LESSON IV.—THIRD QUARTER.

Temptation, trial, trust, triumph. This is the story of a Christian's life in four words. Through the ages God made certain promises to his chosen people. These promises were conditional. They were never broken on God's side when the conditions were kept by the people. Very frequently the people failed to keep their part of the agreement, then the compact failed.

God's greatest promise is the free, full salvation offered to those who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. He finds the sinful in the midst of trial and temptation, and he asks trust. This trust unites the heart with God through Christ our king.

LESSON VII.—THIRD QUARTER.

It is sometimes better to have sinned and been forgiven, than never to have felt the need of forgiveness. There are those who never get near to God, because they have no conscious need of him. They are living what they believe to be moral lives, and have no realization of sinfulness. They can not know the sweetness and the peace that comes into the soul that has come to the foot of Calvary, and with humble and contrite spirit laid a broken heart at the Master's feet. Confess him before men not only as the world's sin-bearer, but as your personal sin-bearer.

LESSON VI.—THIRD QUARTER.

Because God chose David to be a servant and a king, he did not take from him his human disposition to sin. David was a good man. But he was a man. He had his trials and temptations, and did not always succeed in putting them behind him. His trust was in the Lord, and when he was in need, he went right to the Source of power. David's victories were daily victories. He did not win a victory over temptation so that it came no more. He won for to-day, and trusted God to give him a new victory each day. As David did, so must we do. Trust God each day, and ask for delivery from each new temptation.

LESSON IX.—THIRD QUARTER.

The devil is a sure paymaster. He never fails. He sometimes lies and deceives about the kind of wages, promising pleasure and giving pain, but at the final reckoning the wages that are counted out is Death. Death to the soul. Death to the ability to enjoy the sweet, pure things of life. Death to all that is beautiful and pure in life. Prompt, sure wages, these. Ambition, wicked desire, led Absalom to the day of payment for sin, and that payment was prompt and sure. It was death.

The way of the ungodly shall perish. You can not earn the wages and refuse them. The soul and the body is security, and the wages are taken whether you will or not.

LESSON VIII.—THIRD QUARTER.

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. God meant exactly what he said when he wrote this command. He had ordained the laws of life, and he knew that a child that did not obey, was not the child that would be likely to grow to vigorous young manhood or healthy old age. A child that fails to honor its parents, fails to place itself in line with the blessing of God. When Absalom plotted against his father, he took the road that led to certain disgrace and death. His death in the oak was the outcome of breaking the command.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. WORDS OF WISDOM.—1. *A Well Spring.*—The springs at the base of the Alps are most full when in the greatest heat the plains below are dry and parched. So the heart which has its supply from the eternal heights of true wisdom will not fail when temporal supplies vanish; indeed the less there is of help and encouragement from without, the more it can and will bring from within.

2. *Make the Heart Wise.*—Suppose my watch was not going well, and I should take it to the town clock, and make the hands of the watch point the same as the clock. Very soon they would be as far away as ever. I must send my watch to the jeweler, that he may put its heart right, and then the hands will go right, too. So when the heart is right the hands and feet and tongue will be right, too (*Inglis*). Place yourself in the middle of the stream of power and wisdom which flows into you as life, place yourself in the full center of that flood, then you are without effort impelled to truth, to right, and a perfect contentment (*Emerson*).

3. *Pleasant Words.*—They oil the wheels of life, and they run more easily, they fill in the rough places and make things smoother, they are a safe packing for people's fragile feelings to keep them from injury, and they are a most valuable ointment for the bruises we get in jostling over the stones and ruts of life's journey. If men realized how many such bruises there were hidden in hearts all around us, surely our words would be more gentle, our judgments more kind, and in making the way smoother for others we would make it smoother for ourselves.

4. *The Choosing of the Way.*—An old man stood by the window one New Year's night, and looked up into the heavens, and down upon the still earth, and thought that they contained no one so wretched as himself. His grave was near, and youth and joy far away. He remembered the fair morning when his father had stood with him upon the cross-road of life and showed him the two ways from which he might choose, one ending in a land of light and beauty, the other in darkness and despair. Ah, why had he chosen that other; it had not given such promise of its end, but he saw it now in all its horror. The false lights mocked him, and a star falling from the heavens appeared to him a symbol of his wasted life. Suddenly from the tower floated the sound of music for the New Year like a distant anthem. The tears fell fast as he cried, "Come again, O youth, come again!" And it came, for he had but been dreaming. He was still a young man at the cross-ways of life, able to turn back from the way which he had just entered, and choose the right. Turn with him, O young man, lest when thou cry, "Come again, beautiful youth," it will not come again (*From Jean Paul Richter*).

II. WORKS OF WICKEDNESS.—1. *Sowing Strife.*—Of all dark elements in the problem of society, evil speaking is one of the most mischievous and inexcusable. When it is only thoughtless gossip it is bad enough. Careless words—they form an arrow which every repetition tips with poison until it wounds—how cruelly. They cause misunderstandings, and heart-burnings. No harm was intended, but has any human being the right to be thoughtless?

> "You can draw in your kites like white-winged birds,
> But you can't do that way when you're flying words."

And when the evil is mean, when the unkind words arise from an unkind feeling, and a desire, even unacknowledged, to injure another's standing among men, then God forgive the speaker; he may cast the stain intended, but the deepest stain is on his own soul.

2. *Enticed and Led Astray.*—I have seen a noble and ingenuous youth, night by night reverently saluting his mother; day by day filially obeying his father; year by year brightening his parents' hearts with joy and gratitude. In an evil hour a wild, worldly companion gains his ear—laughs at his tenderness and gentleness,—weans him from home and child-likeness. And I said, "The Philistines have slain Jonathan, and knew not the moral beauty of which they deprived a house." I have seen a husband—the strong and gentle companion of a trusting wife—gradually led away by vicious men to a gay and wicked course, and I have said, "The Philistines have slain Jonathan, and knew not what a wealth of love has perished from society" (*Griffin*).

III. WAYS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.—1. *A Crown of Glory.*—

Softly, O softly, the years have swept by thee,
Touching thee lightly with tenderest care;
Sorrow and death they have often brought nigh thee;
Yet they have left thee but beauty to wear.
Eyes that grow dim to the earth and its glory
Have a sweet recompense that youth can not know;
Ears that grow dim to the earth and its story
Drink in the songs that from Paradise flow.
Growing old graciously, purer than snow.

2. *Ruling the Spirit.*—Science tells us that underlying all the tumult and restfulness of the waves of the ocean, over which the winds trample, there is a vast stratum of altogether motionless waters, so utterly tranquil that the tiniest and most fragil sheli at the bottom is not stirred. In the human nature of our Lord was a well of tenderness, easily stirred; but underneath all this there was the eternal calm, unstirred, unmoved—the divinity within (*Grosart*).

3. *The Disposing of the Lord.*—My strength during all my life has been precisely this—that I have no choice. During the last thirty-six years God has twelve times changed my home, and fifteen times changed my work. The support of my life is to know that I am doing what God wishes and not what I wish myself. The best thing often which could happen to a man is to be thwarted in his favorite hopes. The old song sings the hope that in the time of old age we may find one face at our fireside whom we loved when we were young; but I would say, far rather than this, God grant that we may find him there in the home of the darkened life. Then all else will seem like dross (*Archdeacon Farrar*).

HE ONLY IS SAFE STRONG WHO COMMANDS CONTROLS HIMSELF

(From Holman's Self-Pronouncing Bible.)

PROVERBS.

The Hebrew title of this book is *Mishle* ("by-words," "proverbs," "similitudes"); in the LXX. it is called it is called Παροιμίαι ("Proverbs"), and similarly in the Vulgate *Liber Proverbiorum.*

It is a manual of practical rules of life, as the Psalms are a manual of daily devotion; the former guiding the actions, the latter the thoughts. It is a book of daily lessons for all ages and states of men and women. "Wisdom" is religion; and "folly" is irreligion.

It may be divided as follows:—1. Introduction,—the value of wisdom (i.-ix.). 2. The Proverbs (strictly so called) of Solomon (x.-xxii. 16). 3. Another introduction, on the study of wisdom (xxii. 17-xxiv.). 4. A second volume of true Proverbs, collected by those who were set by Hezekiah to restore the Temple worship, among whom were Isaiah and Hosea (xxv.-xxix.). 5. An Appendix, containing the instructions of Agur to his pupils Ithiel and Ucal, and of the mother of Lemuel to her son (xxx., xxxi.).

It is generally allowed that the main portion (x.-xxii. 16) is the work of Solomon, consisting of Proverbs composed or collected by himself, and that the other portions have been collected and added to it subsequently, the original title being preserved for the whole of the compilation, just as was done for the Psalms.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.
—Prov. xviii. 10.

LESSON XIII. SEPTEMBER 27.

REVIEW.

The lessons of this quarter cover forty years, the period that David reigned as king—first over Judah for seven and a half years at Hebron, and then over all Israel for thirty-three years at Jerusalem.

LESSON.	TITLE.	GOLDEN TEXT.	LESSON.	TITLE.	GOLDEN TEXT.
I.	D. K. of J.	The Lord rei'neth;	VII.	D's C. and F.	Create in me a
II.	D. K. ov. a. I.	David went on	VIII.	A's R.	Honor thy father
III.	A. B. to J.	O Lord of hosts	IX.	A's D. and D.	The Lord knoweth
IV.	G. P. to D.	In thee, O Lord	X.	D's L. f. G. H.	Blessed are they
V.	D's K.	Be kindly affect'd	XI.	D's G. to G.	The Lord is
VI.	D's V.	The Lord is my	XII.	D. V.	There is a way that

(1 Cor. x. 11-13).

11 Now [all] these things happened unto them [for ensamples: by way of example]; and they [are were] written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the [world ages] are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as [is common man can] to man: bear: but God [is is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [also make a make also the] way [to of] escape, that ye may be able to [bear it. endure it.]

LESSONS FROM THE QUARTER.

By way of example.—God means to teach us by the experience of others. The history of Israel was full of "examples," some to be followed, and some avoided. The pillar of fire stood for the Bible; the baptism into Moses, our baptism into Christ; the manna, Christ our teacher and lover; Israel's priest, prophet, and king, ours; Jerusalem, our city above. The frailty and fickleness, the disheartening sins, and the stern punishment of the people, is told as a warning to us.

Upon whom the ends of the ages are come.—The Patriarchal and Jewish ages are gone; we live in the last, the Christian age. Israel never had such blessings as ours. Even when prophets spake, how faintly did they compare with our Bible! How poor any synagogue compared with a Christian church! Good men and strong men fell in the past. Do not be heedlessly confident. Yet you can stand, for God will supplement your weakness, if you truly use your strength.

General Questions.—What king reigned before David? What became of him? What king reigned over part of the nation at the same time as David? How did his reign end? What did David do with the ark of the Lord? What happened?

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Sept. 21.—David's and Christ's Use of the Sabbath (Luke vi. 1-11).

Tuesday, Sept. 22. — David's Words Applied to Judas (Acts i. 15-26).

Wednesday, Sept. 23.—David's Words Concerning Christ (Acts ii. 22-36).

Thursday, Sept. 24. — David's Forecast of Opposition (Acts iv. 23-31).

Friday, Sept. 25.—David Desired to Build (Acts vii.44-50).

Saturday, Sept. 26. — David Prophesies the Stumbling of Israel (Rom. xi. 7-21).

Sunday, Sept. 27.—David's Son According to Promise (Acts xiii. 16-37).

BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

STANDARD BIBLE LESSONS.

Vol. XXI., No. 4.

PREPARED BY E. B. WAKEFIELD.
GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES BY J. W. McGARVEY.

Oct., Nov., Dec., 1896.

THIRD QUARTER.—STUDIES IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

LESSON I. OCTOBER 4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways.
—I. Kings. ii. 3.

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.

I. Kings i. 28-39.

Time.—1015 B. C. But few months before the death of David. **Places.**—Jerusalem, En-rogel, and Gihon.

Geographical Notes.—The place En-rogel, where Adonijah had assembled the conspirators who were to help him to dethrone his father and prevent Solomon from becoming king (verse 9), is about a mile south of the city in the valley of the Kedron. It is the site of an inexhaustible well, which at times has furnished the whole city with water, and has never been known to fail. In wet seasons the water overflows from the mouth of the well, although it is one hundred and twenty-four feet deep. The mouth of the well is now enclosed within an old and dilapidated stone building. Gihon, the spot to which Solomon was taken to be anointed, is supposed to have been a spring in the valley which then separated Mount Zion, on which alone the city then stood, from Mount Moriah, on which the temple was afterward built. Both the valley and the latter mount were then outside the city. The large pools west of the city, now called Upper Gihon, and Lower Gihon, took their names from this spring. The spring must have been covered up when the city was extended across the valley, and the valley filled almost even with the two mountains. Recent underground explorations have developed the fact that water still flows there far beneath the present surface.

The Book of Kings.—The two books of Kings—originally one—and divided first by the Greek translators in the Septuagint, embrace a period of four and a half centuries; from the accession of Solomon, B. C. 1015, to the period of Nebuchadnezzar's

VALLEY OF GIHON.

death, and the close of the Babylonian captivity, about B. C. 550. Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship to Jeremiah, a source which seems possible and even probable, but yet is not certain.

Introductory.—David's work day is past. He is seventy years old, still clear in mind, but worn out in body. He is confined to his room, and lives by constant watch-care. The affairs of his kingdom must be managed by other hands, and in a few weeks or months at farthest, some other must be king. The nation understands this.

Adonijah.—Adonijah was David's fourth son, born while he was king at Hebron, and now his eldest heir. Ammon and Absalom had died by violence. The second son, Chiliab or Daniel (I. Chron. iii. 1), seems to have died in youth. Adonijah was now about thirty-five years old, and while lacking Absalom's popular abilities, had much of his pride and ambition. The kingdom was now virtually without a head; the king must soon have a successor; and to the popular mind, Adonijah seemed most naturally to follow. Moreover, to men of affairs like Joab and Abiathar, he appeared the most desirable. He was in the best vigor of life, was fair of presence, and kingly in spirit. Solomon was under twenty years of age, and had been kept close to the palace. Without conferring with his father, or waiting for others to settle the matter, Adonijah took on kingly airs, and proposed to be recognized as the "heir apparent," and established as David's successor upon the throne. Strictly he purposed no revolt against David, but to preclude Solomon.

A Crisis Precipitated.—Adonijah did not count on the strength of his opposition, and he only hastened the event which he feared. Bathsheba, in the prime of mature womanhood, stood close to the king's heart, and Nathan, the aged prophet, who had been Solomon's teacher, was watchful of his interests. The ill-starred attempt of Absalom was fresh in men's minds, and the most considerate distrusted violent attempts to gain David's throne.

While Adonijah's feast at En-rogel was in progress, in which he was to be saluted and entrenched as king, Nathan hurried to Bathsheba. No time was to be lost. She was to seek the presence of the king and remind him of his promise to her that Solomon should reign after him, and call attention to Adonijah's treasonable proceedings. Nathan would speedily follow her, and emphasize her pleadings, for the king must be at once aroused to action.

28 Then king Dā'vid answered and said, Call me Bāth'shĕ-ba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

29 And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that who hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, adversity,

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Sept. 28.—Adonijah Aspires to the Throne (I. Kings i. 1-10).

Tuesday, Sept. 29.—Nathan the Prophet Guards Solomon's Interests (I. Kings i. 11-27).

Wednesday, Sept. 30).—Solomon Anointed King (I. Kings. i. 28-39).

Thursday, Oct. 1. — Solomon Takes the Throne (I. Kings i. 40-53).

Friday, Oct. 2.—Solomon Appointed (I. Chron. xxviii. 1-10).

Saturday, Oct. 3.—Mercy and Judgment (Ps. ci. 1-8).

Sunday, Oct. 4.—A Greater King (Luke xix. 28-40).

I. THE KING CONFIRMS HIS OATH.

EXPLANATORY.

28, 29. Call me Bath-sheba.—Nathan has just told the king of Adonijah's proceedings, and asked if he has authorized them, while his nearer servants have been left wholly uninformed. The prophet knows that the movement is insurrectionary, but he wishes to make the king feel the seriousness of it. David replies by summoning Bathsheba, who by oriental etiquette had left the room when Nathan had entered. **As the Lord liveth.**—A common form of oath among the Hebrews. David has been weakly indulgent of all his sons; perhaps, as is often the case in old age, he has striven to hold too exclusively his power; but, as is ever the case with him, he comes right at at last. He has known storm and remorse, but he has peace and forgiveness now.

"How calm, how beautiful comes on the evening hour when storms are gone."

30 Even Verily as I sware unto thee by the LORD the God of Is'ra-el, saying, Assuredly Sol'o-mon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even verily so will I certainly do this day.

31 Then Bath'shĕ-ba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence obeisance to the king, and said, Let my lord king Dā'vid live for ever.

32 And king Dā'vid said, Call me Zā'dŏk the priest, and Nā'than the prophet, and Be-nā'iah the son of Je-hoi'a-da. And they came before the king.

33 The And the king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Sol'o-mon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gī'hon:

34 And let Zā'dŏk the priest and Nā'than the prophet anoint him there king over Is'ra-el: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Sŏl'o-mon.

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30. Verily, as I sware unto thee.—He does not forget his promise, nor will he prove untrue to it. The pledge concerning Solomon had not been published abroad; it would have endangered the young prince's life if it had been; but it will be fulfilled. The rule of descent has never been fixed in the east as in the west. Lange says: "David did not deprive Adonijah of what rightfully belonged to him; he only did not bestow upon him what he craved in his foolish arrogance and ambition to the detriment of the kingdom. It would have been the greatest misfortune had he ascended the throne." David had promised Bathsheba that her son should reign after him; now he increases the promise; to defeat the present attempt, and to prevent disturbances after his death, he will see Solomon established as king while he himself lives; he will cause him to be crowned this very day. Bathsheba bows in reverent gratitude; her companion in an old bitter sin at least has never forsaken her.

II. THE KING EXECUTES HIS OATH.

32. Call me Zadok the priest.—Zadok and Abiathar both acted as chief priests; but Zadok apparently grew in prominence and influence to Abiathar's dissatisfaction. Nathan represented the prophetic element; and Benaiah was commander of David's bodyguard, and hence now first in military power. These, having no part in Adonijah's feast, were in immediate reach. **Take with you the servants of your lord.**—That is, the soldiers, the royal bodyguard. **Cause Solomon . . . to ride upon mine own mule.**—"Better to mount the king's throne than his mule," was a saying; to ride without permission was accounted worthy of death. When the people saw Solomon peacefully riding on the king's mule, attended by his highest officers, and his bodyguard, they would read at once that David had appointed him king. **Bring him down to Gihon.**—A little way out of Jerusalem, where the act of consecration might be peacefully performed, and the regal procession plainly seen. **Anoint him there.**—Taking a horn of sacred oil from the tabernacle, Zadok was to pour it upon him, a token that he was endowed and commissioned of heaven for the kingly work. **Say, God save king Solomon.**—They were thus to hail and announce him as king; and the trumpet was to make the proclamation conspicuous. **Then ye shall come up after him.**—You shall escort him back to the palace. **He shall come and sit upon my throne.**—By royal edict he should take the throne; and to take the throne meant power. David really abdicated in favor of his son.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, that is, and he may, shall come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler, prince over Is'ra-el and over Jŭ'dah.

36 And Be-na'iah the son of Je-hoi'a-da answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD, the God of my lord the king, say so *too*.

37 As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Sŏl'o-mon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king Dā'vid.

38 So Zā'dŏk the priest, and Nā'than the prophet, and Be-na'-iah the son of Je-hoi'a-da, and the Chĕr'eth-ītes and the Pē'-leth-ītes, went down, and caused Sol'o-mon to ride upon king Dā'vid's mule, and brought him to Gī'hon.

39 And Zā'dŏk the priest took an, the horn of oil out of the tabernacle, Tent, and anointed Sŏl'o-mon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Sŏl'o-mon.

36-39. Benaiah answered the king, and said, Amen.—The sturdy commander spoke for the party. He accepted and approved the king's decision; he invoked the approval and blessing of God upon it. The vigor of David in this hour, his clearness in detail, and the decisive and kingly way in which he did his last kingly act, must have gratified and given boldness to the men who stood faithful. Step by step, as the king directed, did these servants do. ("Cherethitor" and "Pelethitor" are terms repeatedly used for David's bodyguards. The meaning of the term is not certain.) Indeed the work was done with gladness and boldness by those most loyal friends of David. This was no rebellion; it was executing the king's last and highest behest, and one that would reflect glory upon his reign. The people of Jerusalem caught the spirit of the occasion. To them a weight of anxiety for the future was taken off, and a wise and fitting deed seemed done. "The earth rent" with their voice of joy.

The effect of the coronation of Solomon upon the feast at En-rogel was immediate. The guests scattered, and Adonijah fled and laid hold of the altar. Solomon condoned his offense and bade him go and abide in peace at his home. Indeed, for the present at least, the offenses of all were passed over.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. The Promise Reaffirmed. 28-31. Who had been talking with David? Who was attempting to secure the throne? For whom did David call? What reference to God's dealings did he make? What promise had he made to Bath-sheba? What does he now declare? How did Bathsheba express her gratitude? **2. The Promise Fulfilled.** 32-39. Whom did David next summon? Whither did he command them to take Solomon? In what manner was he to go? What ceremony was to be performed there? What were they to do then? To what did David say he had appointed Solomon? How did Benaiah express his approval of this? What wish did he utter for Solomon? What did they proceed to do? From what place did they take the anointing oil? What did all the people say?

COLLECT.

Ever blessed Father, give us humble and teachable hearts, that we may not seek places appointed to others, or desire the things that will bring harm to us. In all our aspirations may we be open and sincere, wholly resigned to thy will, and to the rulings of thy providence. If high place awaits us, give us grace to stand. If low place is ours, give us more grace to stand. Help us to know assuredly, that he who gives on earth the most, and gains the least, shall find a richer grace in heaven. May any place of service be dear, and all life a joy to us. In Christ. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. AS I SWARE.—1. *A Pledge to be Kept.*—David hesitates not a moment to reaffirm his promise, with the more justice indeed because it was made by the authority of God, yet reaffirming it simply on the ground that it was made. A pledge is not a thing to be taken lightly, without the certainty of its wisdom and God's approval, yet once taken, truth demands that it be kept, unless God himself stand in the way of the fulfillment.

2. *The Throne Usurped.*—In the days of the Moors in Spain, there were two princes, one of whom had usurped the throne and cast his brother, the true heir, into prison. A messenger came to the prison one day with orders for the execution of the prince. He asked leave to finish a game of chess which he was playing with his jailer, and just as it was ended a messenger came saying that the usurper had suddenly died, and instead of putting the heir to death, they all at once fell at his feet and did homage to him as their king. See now how the move is made which shall checkmate the plans of the usurper Adonijah.

3. *Trouble Should Remind of the Helper.*—The sun of the grand old king's life is sinking low. Of late it has shone in a clear sky, but once more the clouds are closing up. Have you ever noticed how the presence of clouds adds glory to the sunset? So it is here, the very clouds reflect the golden glow of trustful peace, for they call to mind how One "has redeemed his soul out of all distresses," and the old fire flashes forth as he gathers his failing energies to meet this emergency. So should every cloud be to us a means of reflecting and showing more brightly our faith and hope.

4. *Fear at Rest.*—The king's word is enough. Bathsheba bows with grateful reverence, satisfied that her son is to sit upon the throne of his father instead of being, with herself, "counted offenders," to be dealt with according to Adonijah's fancy. One mightier than David has given us promise for every condition of our lives. If they be not enough to satisfy us it is because we do not accept them with their full significance, and the active faith which shall make them true. Now as then in ready and peaceful action all shall be well. General Garfield, shortly before he became President, received a letter containing the following lines, quoted from Goethe:

> "Future hides in it gladness and sorrow,
> We press still thorow;
> Naught abides in it, daunting us—Onward!"

II. SO WILL I DO.—1. *The Better Way.*—David does not send out his fighting men to assert his royal power and crush the usurper. His days of war are over, and the day of peace has come. His feeble hand does not clutch at the useless honors of the royal name. The best interests of his people can be served in a quieter way, and he lifts the crown, so nobly won, and so grandly held, from his silver locks and places it upon the brow of Solomon. The question is settled. It is not always best to assert our rights. Sometimes it is so, and yet better far to yield something of our own claims, if matters may be thus more peacefully adjusted and God's cause suffer no harm.

2. *King in My Stead.*—When one sea floweth, another ebbeth; when one star riseth, another setteth. When light is in Goshen, darkness is in Egypt. When Mordecai groweth into favor, Haman groweth out of favor. When Benjamin beginneth, Rachel endeth. Thus are we rising or setting, getting or spending, winning or losing, growing or fading, until we arrive at heaven or hell (*Smith*).

> "Golden to-day, to-morrow gray;
> So fades love from life away."

O cold, false voice, die back again into your outer darkness! I know the reaper will come, and the golden grain will bow before him, for this is nature's law; but in its death lies the highest work of its circling life. All is fair, but this is the fairest of all.

> "Though every summer green the plain,
> This harvest can not bloom again."

False still! This harvest shall bloom again in perpetual loveliness. It shall leap in the grace of the lithe-limbed steed, it shall shine in the splendor of light-winged birds, it shall laugh in the baby's dimple, toss in the child's fair curls and blush in the maiden's cheek. Nay, by some inward way it shall spring again in the green pastures of the soul, blossoming in great thoughts, in kindly words, in Christian deeds, till the soil that cherished it shall seem to seeing eyes all consecrate, and the earth that flowers such growths shall be Eden, the garden of God (*from "Summer Rest"*).

3. *Keep the Charge.*—Ruskin says: "There is no such thing as unchartered liberty in the universe; the stars have it not; the earth has it not; the sea has it not." The command, "Ye shall keep my judgments," is followed by the promise, "The land that was desolate shall become like the Garden of Eden." Co-operation with God is the only way to succeed. If you would quarry stone you must follow the lines of cleavage. If you would cleave wood, you must work with the grain (*Dickson*). In the summer of 1871 I met two Prussian officers. I asked them how the German troops behaved when going into battle. Did they cheer and encourage each other? I received this reply: "Never in our experience has the cry 'We must conquer,' been heard from German soldiers; but in a hundred instances we have heard them resolutely exclaim, 'We must do our duty.'" A sense of duty and not a love of glory made these soldiers invincible and victorious (*Huxley*).

> Noble desires, unless filled up by action,
> Are but a shell of gold, hollow within (*Roscoe*).

III. DETHRONEMENT OF THE FALSE BY ENTHRONEMENT OF THE TRUE.—When Bathsheba and Nathan brought David news of Adonijah's revolt, and told him that Joab and Abiathar were at the coronation feast at En-rogel, it is noteworthy that the king made no direct attack on the conspirators. He merely commanded that Solomon should be seated on the royal mule, that he should ride in state to Gihon, and should be anointed and *proclaimed king*. It was this which paralyzed the traitorous assembly. The method was the wisest and surest; for it not only removed a present evil, but provided a future good. The lesson is obvious, and widely applicable. 1. *Vain thoughts* are to be expelled by the incoming of what is wise and good. High mental associations are exceedingly important. Wandering thoughts in worship; silliness and shallowness in social life are cured in one way—by giving ourselves the culture that *crowds in* holier and higher thoughts. 2. *Unworthy affections* are to be overcome by a worthy love. When love is set on the unworthy, force is useless, argument is vain. But if the love is diverted to a nobler object, it naturally disentangles its tendrils from the unworthy. 3. *Error* is to be subdued by truth. The hatred of artisans to machinery when first introduced was not conquered by dragoons nor by prison, but by the discovery on their part that opposition was mistaken and imagined evils did not follow. So with all errors. We shall not destroy heathenism by the abuse of idols, but by the presentation of Christ. 4. *Care* is to be extirpated by prayer. In many hearts care is enthroned. We can not reason away our anxieties, nor drive them from our minds; but we can have the rest our children have, who never trouble about the morrow, because they trust in us. It would be vain to say, "Be careful for nothing," if the apostle had not added, "but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God." True prayer is the great care cure. 5. *Evils in society* are to be overthrown by what is nobler than they. Animal appetites must be overcome by introducing higher and ever-increasing joys of the higher nature; low amusements must give away to more rational delights; pernicious literature to what is pure and elevating. The evil of the world must be *pushed out* by the good. "Long culture; you must make men over," you say. Even so. The better joys and principles are transforming. But so is the world saved (*adapted from P. C.*).

LESSON II. OCTOBER 11.

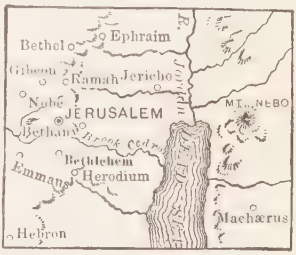
GOLDEN TEXT.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. —Ps. cxi. 10.

SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE.

I. Kings iii. 5-15.

Time.—B. C. 1015. **Places.**—Jerusalem; and Gibeon, where the ancient tabernacle stood, six miles north of Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—Gibeon, where Solomon had gone to sacrifice when the event of this lesson occurred, was the same city whose inhabitants craftily surrendered to Joshua, pretending that they lived in a distant land. It was situated on a mountain with a rounded top, about seven miles from Jerusalem, in northwesterly direction. The mountain is a conspicuous point in the view for many miles around, and it is now crowned by a dilapidated village of small stone buildings. The inhabitants number not more than two or three hundred, and are all Mohammedans. This was a proper place of worship because the old tabernacle, built by Moses, with its altar and all of its furniture, except the ark of the covenant, was standing there (II. Chron i. 3). During the time that the ark was separated from the tabernacle, sacrifices were offered at various places beside the altar in front of the tabernacle.



Intervening History.—Death of David.—A few months after Solomon took the throne, David quietly fell asleep. Take his life as a whole, he did a prodigious work. As the organizer of a weak and divided kingdom, he showed himself a statesman, patient and adroit. As a warrior beating back the environing foes of Israel, he proved himself a commander of first rank. As a lover of the worship and service of God, he remained the poet-priest of the chosen people. A superficial view of his life is apt to do him injustice. He should be judged by his time, and deeply read. If he sinned darkly, he also suffered greatly, and repented deeply. His stern, final judgments on Joab and Shimei we believe to be out of perspective, and told to help explain subsequent history. With prophetic eye he saw that Solomon's peaceful reign demanded the prompt destruction of these troublesome elements. All in all, he stands forth as one of the grandest and most humanly-attractive figures in history.

Early Troubles of Solomon's Reign.—The new administration of Solomon naturally would leave some disappointed and disaffected elements, and the extreme youth of the king gave ground for thinking that his government might be weak and unstable. It is evident that Adonijah and his leading associates in conspiracy still had hopes and plans for the undoing of Solomon, and the realization of their old dreams. The king began his reign forbearingly, but on the first manifestation of a plot, he struck sternly, and even with ferocity. The deaths of Adonijah and Joab at least taught Israel that a weakling was not on the throne. The death of Shimei "was to maintain the awe and majesty of a king's word."

Solomon.—We now fairly enter upon the life of one who, if he was the wisest, was certainly one of the most foolish of men. He gives great promise, and then disappoints. He had great endowments, and at last rendered a poor account of them. His life well studied is a powerful lesson. Born in the palace, the second son of David and Bathsheba (the first born dying in infancy), he was from the first a child of favor. Educated under the care of Nathan, he not only was taught in the writings of Moses and the earlier Hebrew literature, but he seems to have studied nature at first hand profoundly. He ought to have been wise and good.

5 In Gĭb'e-on the LORD appeared to Sŏl'o-mon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Oct. 5.—Death of David (I. Kings ii. 1-11).
Tuesday, Oct. 6.—Death of Adonijah (I. Kings ii. 12-25).
Wednesday, Oct. 7.—Judgment on Joab (I. Kings ii. 26-35).
Thursday, Oct. 8.—Shimei Forfeits His Life (I. Kings ii. 36-46).
Friday, Oct. 8.—Solomon's Wise Choice (I. Kings iii. 1-15).
Saturday, Oct. 9.—An Example of Solomon's Wisdom (I. Kings iii. 16-28).
Sunday, Oct. 10.—God Still Gives Wisdom (James i. 1-18)

6 And Sŏl'o-mon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant Dā'vid my father great mercy, kindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of Dā'vid my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that can not be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad evil: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

I. A NOBLE PRAYER.

EXPLANATORY.

5. In Gibeon.—The ancient tabernacle and the brazen altar were at Gibeon. Deeply burdened with his new responsibilities, and in the true spirit of worship, Solomon, with a large company, had gone thither. A thousand victims were offered, and the sacrificial feast must have lasted for a week at least. **The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream.**—Dreams are often idle and incidental wanderings of the mind; but often also they are connected with waking thoughts, and show the temper and desires of the dreamer. This was more than an ordinary dream. Solomon was in a humble and prayerful frame of mind, in right condition to commune with God, and God visited his spirit. **Ask what I shall give thee.**—A blessed, and yet a trying, question; a question which God yet asks those who seek him. Not that he grants every request, but he tests the desires of the heart; and those who do steadfastly desire above all else divine wisdom, a heavenly disposition—his good and Holy Spirit—will find their prayer well answered.

> Not fairer scenes, but happier eyes to see.
> Not gold without, but treasure rich within,
> Which I may ever keep. Grant this, O Lord!

6 8. Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David.—He first recounts God's mercies to his father. God's kindness had overmatched David's service; and as repentance had triumphed over sin, so had mercy over judgment. It was regarded as a special work of approval and favor that his throne had been given in peace to his son. **Thou hast made thy servant king.**—Not by his own plot or power had Solomon come to be king; the prophet, priest, and king of God—Nathan, Zadok, and David, had led him to the throne. **And I am but a little child.**—This is the language of humility, of one who is wise to feel weak in the presence of grave responsibility. If Solomon had been a fool he never would have had misgivings about being able to govern an empire. The mass of commentators think he was about nineteen years old at this time. **I know not how to go out or come in.**—Knew not how to bear himself before the people, and lead as the shepherd leads. He is in the midst of cares which he can not escape. The nation, too, is chosen of God; and in it, and through it, he has great purposes to work out. **That can not be numbered.**—He applies to the nation the prophecy given to Abraham (Gen. xiii. 16). The expression is common with respect to vast multitudes.

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Sŏl'o-mon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; judgement;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father Dā'vid did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

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9. Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart.—He prays for wisdom to meet the duties that lie before him—as we should for those that lie before us; he prays for penetration and discrimination; he wishes to be strong to see and to weigh truth. **That I may discern between good and evil.**—He prays for ability to rule with justice. It is no easy matter always to distinguish truth from error. In meeting an evil, or in advancing a truth, it is sometimes hard to tell which of several ways is best. Executive, legislative, and judicial functions were not separated in old eastern governments as they are with us; and the responsibility of the king had almost no end.

II. A GRACIOUS ANSWER.

10, 11. And the speech pleased the Lord.—Though in a dream, Solomon's will and desire were truly expressed. This would have been his prayer at any time. Solomon always had a passion for *knowing* truth; perhaps he faltered in the *doing*. And "he who has high knowledge, and fails to do aright, becomes confused." **Because thou hast asked this thing.**—There were so many things a young king might ask for! But Solomon truly overlooked himself, and asked for the gift that would bless his people. Long life was looked upon as a very great blessing, but he passed over that; the Orient is dazzled by wealth, but that was not in his mind; military glory is apt to be a passion with princes, but he asks not victorious fields, nor the life of his enemies. He prays that he may be prepared to meet his high duties, and serve his people well.

12, 13. Behold, I have done according to thy word.—His prayer was granted. In the opening of his reign, at least, he was marked for the keen sense and justice of his decisions. He had a surprising knowledge of plant and animal life. He had marvelous understanding of human nature, as his proverbs abundantly show. His fame spread far while he lived; and in the region of the east in all the ages since, his wisdom has passed into legend and fable, and his name ranks first amid all ancient heroes. **I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked.**—He who has true wisdom will be rich and great without *worldly* wealth and honor; but great wisdom, *if duty permits*, may help to wealth and honor, even of the transient kind. Solomon had great opportunities for wealth. The commerce of the world passed through his realms; and by building roads and depots, and encouraging foreign trade, he attained to a wealth that was fabulous. And no monarch, who was a man of peace, and did not wage bloody conquests, ever rose to such renown.

15 And Sŏl'o-mon awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream; *And* he came to Je-ru'sa-lĕm, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

14, 15. If thou wilt walk in my ways.—Here was a promise expressly conditioned. Solomon could have long life if he would comply with certain terms. The result was left to himself. At most he did not live beyond sixty years. He forfeited the promise, and it was not fulfilled. **And Solomon awoke.**—It was a dream, and yet it had been a real transaction. The request which he had made expressed the real desire of his heart, and the promises which God had made to him were real, and were fulfilled (*Professor Green*). **He came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark.**—Grateful for the favor bestowed upon him, on his return to Jerusalem he sought the tabernacle which David had there built, which held the ark of the covenant, and continued his sacrifices and thanksgivings.

Who cometh to God's presence, believing and forgiven,
Is loth to take departure; there are the joys of heaven.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Solomon's Choice. 5-9. For what purpose was Solomon at Gibeon? How did the Lord appear to him? What did he bid him do? What does Solomon say of the dealings of God with his father David? What great kindness does he say had been kept for him? How does he regard himself? How does he describe the chosen people? Does he seem to feel the responsibility laid upon him? What is the request which he makes? **2. God's Answer.** 10-15. How did God regard this choice? What things does he mention which Solomon did not ask? What does he say he will do in regard to the request? What will he give him besides? On what condition will he give him also long life? Was this an ordinary dream? Where did Solomon go from Gibeon? What did he do there?

COLLECT.

Merciful Father, in all the perplexities of life, help us to make wise choices. We do not desire wealth, or fame, or any other earthly gift alone. Give us clear minds to see thy truth, pure hearts to feel thy joys. Give us grace to fill well the place to which our life has been brought; may we have so much of wisdom, and gentleness, and hope, that we may make our habitation a garden of the Lord. Bless us now, and forsake us never; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

TOMB OF DAVID.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. WHAT SOLOMON ASKED.—1. *Message in the Night.*—It was after Solomon's sacrifice that God appeared to him. He comes ever to hearts which have turned to him, and made ready for his presence. It was in a time of quiet. He who is not content to be alone in quiet thought sometimes misses some of the highest blessings, for often

"With silence only as their benediction, God's angels come."

2. *An Opportunity to Choose.*—There was no limit to the offer, and it was made by Omnipotence. It is in a sense an isolated case. It is compared by some one to a sheet of blank paper with a millionaire's signature, and that is but a hint of its meaning. Yet our power of being what we will is as great as Solomon's power of having what he would. "Such questions come, more or less distinctly, to us all, and that in every crisis of our lives. They may become fresh starting points to us, seasons of greater nearness to God, and of spiritual advancement, or they may prove times of temptation, if we allow ourselves to be 'drawn away' and enticed of our 'own lust'" (*Edersheim*). But the promise to every man is unlimited, also, unless limited by his lack of faith, or on God's part by man's greater good. He made no favorite of Solomon. "No good thing will he withhold." Would we ask for that which was not his will?

3. *An Ideal Choice.*—The answer is the ideal answer of such a prince, burdened with the responsibility of his position. He remembered the high antecedents of his predecessor, his own youth and weakness, the vastness of his charge, and made the demand which he of all the heroes of the ancient church was the first to claim. He showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom. He became wise, because he had set his heart upon it. This was to him the special aspect through which the Divine Spirit was to be approached, and grasped, and made to bear on the wants of all men. "It was a dream," but the fulfillment of it belonged to actual life (*Stanley*). We do not think how real are our waking dreams. Our definite or half unconscious purposes, thoughts, desires, are ever the seed of our actions. Every one has his ideal, whether he knows it or not, and he becomes like it. We may place our mark so high that we will never reach it; far better that than to place it lower than we might have climbed.

"And God will make divinely real
The highest forms of thine ideal."

4. *Be True to the Highest Motives.*—We can't choose happiness either for ourselves or for another; we can't tell where that will lie. We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that for the sake of obeying the Divine Voice within us, for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives (*George Eliot*)?

The world is used to have its business done
On other grounds, find great effects produced
For power's sake, fame's sake, motives in men's mouth.
Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be true!
And love's the truth of mine (*Browning*).

II. WHAT GOD GAVE.—1. *The Lower Choice Shuts Out the Higher.*—King Midas is said to have asked that everything he touched might turn to gold. It was granted; his couch turned to gold, and he could find no repose; his food turned to gold, and he could get no nourishment, and he lost the very comfort and well being which the gold was to bring. A shepherd boy in the Alps saw a strange flower at his feet. He picked it and a door opened in the hillside. He entered and found a cave filled with gems in which sat a gnome who said: "Take what you wish, but don't forget the best." He dropped the flower and loaded himself with jewels, then went out, hearing again, "Don't forget the best." Remembering his key-flower he turned back to pick it up, but the door was gone, and his gems had turned to dust. Be sure that you do not forget the best, the flower of truth which alone gives value to all else.

SOLOMON'S POOLS.

2. *The Higher May Include the Lower.*—He that has wealth and power without wisdom and grace, is in danger of doing hurt with it; he that hath wisdom and grace without wealth and power, is not capable of doing so much good with it as he that hath both. But if we make sure of wisdom and grace, these will either bring outward prosperity with them, or sweeten the want of it (*Henry*). Perillus, a friend of Alexander, asked of him portions for his daughters. The conqueror immediately ordered fifty talents to be given him. Perillus said that ten talents would be enough. Alexander replied, "Enough for you to receive, but not enough for me to give." How often has God given more than is asked?

3. *As Much Prosperity as We can Bear.*—Having one chief aim does not hinder our having many subordinate ones. The later and swifter ocean racing yachts are built on a peculiar plan. A center-board, or a sharp keel, reaches far down into the water, the depth proportioned to the sails they will carry. So little vessels do not overturn, although they carry vast sheets of canvas in strong gales; and also they can hold themselves steady against the wind and take straight courses. So we may spread all the sail we please to the winds of earthly success and prosperity, if only there is a great central purpose deep enough to hold us steady.

4. *God Pleased With a Good Choice.*—

Think not too meanly of thy low estate;
Thou hast a choice; to choose is to create!
Remember whose the sacred lips that tell
Angels approve thee, when thy choice is well,
And he who made thee to be just and true,
Will bless thee, love thee—ay, respect thee, too (*Holmes*).

YOU MUST MAKE CHOICE; CHOOSE WELL, YOUR FLEETING, AND
MAY MISTAKE CHOICE IS FINAL

GOLDEN TEXT.

Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.
—I. Sam. ii. 30.

LESSON III. OCTOBER 18.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND WISDOM.

I. Kings iv. 25-34.

Time.—The lesson gives a view of Solomon's kingdom after he had fairly gathered up the reins of government. He was crowned B. C. 1015, and ruled about forty years. The culmination of his glory was not long after the completion of the temple, B. C. 1005. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—The extent of Solomon's dominion is stated in two forms in the preceding part of this chapter. First, it is said, that he ruled over "all the kingdoms from the river to the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt" (verse 21); and second, "he had dominion over all the region on this side of the river, from Tiphsah unto Gaza" (verse 24). The two statements are equivalent; for Tiphsah was a city on the river, that is, the Euphrates, and Gaza was the most southern town of the Philistine country, as situated on the border of the desert which extends thence to Egypt. All this territory, except that originally occupied by the twelve tribes, had been conquered by David, and was included in the land promised to Abraham. But this extensive country was not all occupied by Israel, even in Solomon's time; for the dwelling place of Israel was still limited by the expression "from Dan to Beer-Sheba" (verse 25). The latter was and has been for ages the most southern city, and the former the most northern. The reference here made to the vine and the fig tree (verse 25), is characteristic of the country;—for the fig tree, with its broad and thick leaves, makes a perfect shade, and the vine, when trailed over a proper frame, comes next to it; while the olive, the most common tree of the country, has small leaves and scattered branches, and its shade is broken.

GAZA.

The Golden Age of Israel.—It has been cynically said that men always place the golden age in the past or in the future. Possibly they are not so far wrong after all. For if our historian is true, there *has* been such a period in the history. And if the gospel is true, there *will* be such a period hereafter. The reign of Solomon, at least, was the Augustan, the golden age of Israel. The reign of Jesus will be the golden age of the world (*P. C.*). It is sad to think how soon the glory of Solomon's reign faded out. It held the immediate germs of its own decay. As lovers of our country, we have every reason to stand against the pride and luxury that intoxicates and degrades, and that false glory that has no succeeding.

25 And Jū'dea and Is'ra-el dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dăn even to Bē'er-shē'ba, all the days of Sŏl'o-mon.

I. PROSPERITY OF SOLOMON.

EXPLANATORY.

25. Judah and Israel dwelt safely.—The reign of Solomon was one of peace. Only one inconsiderable campaign ever occupied his attention (II. Chron. viii. 3). In the earlier years of his reign, owing to their commanding position and great

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Oct. 12.—Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom (I. Kings iv. 21-34).

Tuesday, Oct. 13.—Reputed Psalm of Ethan the Ezrahite (Ps. lxxxix. 1-18).

Wednesday, Oct. 14.—Reputed Psalm of Heman (Ps. lxxxviii. 1-18).

Thursday, Oct. 15.—Prohibitions on the King (Deut. xvii. 14-20).

Friday, Oct. 16.—A Psalm of Praise of David (Ps. cxlv. 1 21).

Saturday, Oct. 17.—It is Good and Pleasant to Sing Praises (Ps. cxlvii. 1-20).

Sunday, Oct. 18.—The Prayer; and Its Answer (II. Chron. i. 7-17).

26 And Sŏl'o-mon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

27 And those officers provided victuals for king Sŏl'o-mon, and for all that came unto king Sŏl'o-mon's table, every man in his month: they lacked (let) nothing. (be lacking.)

28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries (swift steeds) brought they unto the place where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.

KING SOLOMON.

29 And God gave Sŏl'o-mon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is (is) on the sea shore.

commercial and industrial activity, the people enjoyed almost unexampled prosperity. The inhabitants were made up of four classes: 1. Freeborn Israelites, who had all rights as citizens, and who had special favors and privileges. 2. Canaanites, the native stock of the land, still numerous, and held in serfdom or vassalage to the crown. 3. Foreigners, or "strangers," whom trade or other inducements had brought to the land, and who were accorded special protection. 4. Slaves. These might be taken in war, born in the house, or those who had sold themselves on account of debt. **Every man under his own vine and under his fig tree.**—The expression is proverbial. It meant undisturbed and independent rest. The ancient Jews, unlike the modern in our land, were a race of farmers, and loved a direct connection with the soil and its products. **From Dan even to Beer-sheba.**—From the extreme north to the extreme south of the land. Every place in all Israel enjoyed plenteous peace.

26. Had stalls of horses for his chariots.—The "forty thousand" here given is an unmistakable clerical error. It should be "four thousand" (see II. Chron. ix. 25; I. Kings x. 26). Four thousand horses would be about the right number to hold for fourteen hundred chariots. Two horses were the usual number to a chariot, but a third would well be provided for emergencies or accidents. The introduction of chariots and cavalry was an innovation of Solomon's reign. In contravention of law (Deut. xvii. 16) it could not have been regarded with favor by the more conservative and devout; but this military pomp was in keeping with the rest of Solomon's advance in material glory. It helped to keep the realm in peace when all knew he was well ready for war.

27, 28. Those officers provided victuals for king Solomon (see verse 7).—It may be well to have glittering grandeur, but it should be remembered that some must provide or pay for it. The king divided his realm into twelve portions, and over each was set a superintendent, whose chief business was to collect dues or taxes. The number twelve was chosen that one province might provide for each month; the divisions were not made on trivial boundaries; and the amount collected would well maintain over ten thousand persons. **Barley also and straw for the horses.**—Barley was the common feed of horses in the east, as oats are with us. Military posts were established at various points in the kingdom, and to them supplies were taken. Perfect in detail and discipline, no doubt, was Solomon's military system; but his successor learned, what has over and over been taught, that a great army alone can never save a nation.

II. SOLOMON'S GREAT WISDOM.

29, 30. God gave Solomon wisdom.—Evidently the king had brilliant intellectual endowments. He was God-nurtured and taught. His mind seemed to master every field. **Largeness of heart.**—This does not mean that he was generous; the Orientals used the word *heart* where we would use *intellect* or *mind*. It seemed impossible that others should keep pace with

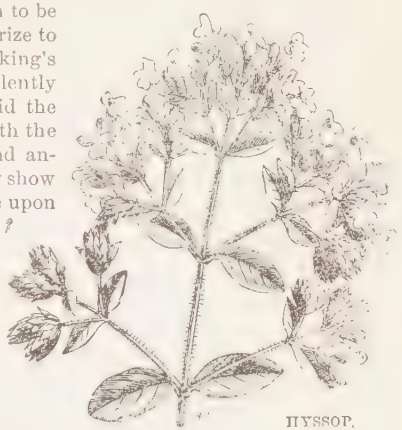
30 And Sŏl'o-mon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east [country], and all the wisdom of E'gypt.

31 For he was wiser than all men; than E'than the Ez'ra-hite, and Hē'man, and Chal'col, and Där'da, the sons of Mā'hol: and his fame was in all [the] nations round about.

32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar [tree] that is in Lĕb'a-non even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he

him, or measure his acquirements;—they were as "sand heaped on the sea shore." **Solomon's wisdom excelled.**—The shrewd and quick-witted Arabian, and the sagacious Egyptian—Solomon overmatched them all. Perhaps his local fame rested most of all upon his keen and quick perception as displayed in his judicial decisions. The judgment that he gave in the case where the two women claimed the living child (Ch. iii. 16-28) would delight the eastern mind. A king of Thrace is remembered because, when chosen arbiter of three men who claimed each to be the one son, and hence heir of a king, made the prize to depend on shooting straight-aimed arrows into the king's dead body. Two drew the bow, but one walked silently away. "He is the son; give him the throne," said the judge. Hard questions and riddles were popular with the eastern mind. Solomon surpassed in proposing and answering these. An example from Proverbs xxx. may show their character: There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise—*what are they?*



HYSSOP.

The ants are a people not strong,
Yet they provide their meat in the summer;
The conies are but a feeble folk,
Yet they make their houses in the rock;
The locusts have no king,
Yet they go forth all of them by bands;
The lizard thou canst seize with thy hand,
Yet is she in king's palaces.

31, 32. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan.—He is compared with the ablest poets and musicians of his time, and he easily outranked them. **His fame was in all the nations.**—It is remarkable what a fame Solomon left behind him in the regions of the east. He had wisdom which mastered the genii or demons of the invisible world. Josephus tells of beholding one Eleazar, who, in the presence of Vespasian, cast a demon out of one afflicted, by the spell of Solomon's incantations. In the Arabian Nights a genie, that had been close confined for eighteen hundred years under the seal of Solomon, when accidentally released by the fisherman, began to cry: "Solomon, Solomon, the great prophet! pardon, pardon, pardon; I never more will oppose your will." When again induced to enter his old prison, he was powerless still against the seal of Solomon. So vast and perverted the fame of his wisdom! **He spoke three thousand proverbs.**—Of these less than one-third have been preserved to us in the book of Proverbs. Many of them show a broad and deep knowledge of life; a clear insight into human character. **His songs were a thousand and five.**—All these are lost except his "Song of Songs," and perhaps one or two psalms. David was not so wise as Solomon, but he probably wrote more that deserved to live than his son did. The value of a man's work depends quite as much upon his heart as upon his head.

spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

34 And there came of all people, peoples to hear the wisdom of Sŏl'o-mon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

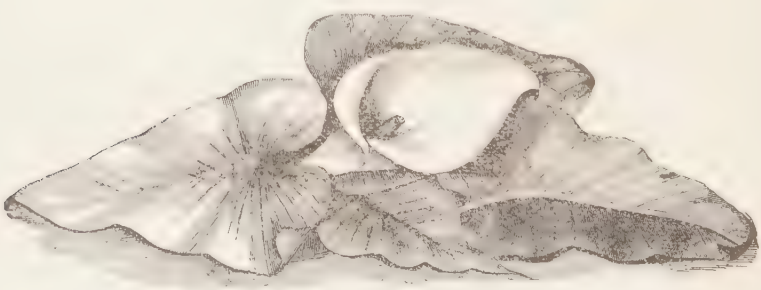
33, 34. He spake of trees.—His knowledge was not only speculative, but scientific. He evidently enjoyed the study of natural history. He studied all accessible plants, from the tall cedar of Lebanon, which to the Israelite was princeliest of trees, to the moss-like hyssop that grew out of the wall. In the same way did he study the animal kingdom from highest to lowest; and when in his writings he speaks of animal life, it is as of one who knows it well. **There came of all peoples to hear the wisdom.**—Wisdom attracts the wise, and Solomon's court should have been a great center of intellectual life, and should have left large and permanent results in the way of advancement of knowledge. Almost nothing appears to have resulted. Great powers at length seem to have been satisfied in displaying themselves in skillful solution of useless questions; or to have been dissipated amid the luxury and sensuality of the palace.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Material Possessions. 25–28. What was the condition of the Jewish nation under Solomon? What was meant by "from Dan to Beer-sheba"? What possessions of Solomon are mentioned? What was his method of securing the necessary support for his establishment? (See note on verse 27.) What did they provide? **2. Intellectual Power.** 29–34. To what is Solomon's understanding compared? What did it excel? How far did his fame extend? What were his literary productions? How did he show his wisdom in natural science? Who came to hear his wisdom?

COLLECT.

Teach us, O Lord, that loving kindness overbroods us all. May we know that thou dost give nearer and sweeter blessings to those who are not called to the greater glare and care of life; only help us more abundantly to enter into quiet communion with thee, and to behold that beauty and grandeur are about us everywhere. May we read lessons in nature deeper than Solomon could tell, and listen daily to a Teacher infinitely wiser than he. Bless to us the Bible, the communion of the Lord's house, the printed treasures of Christian thought. And make us rich and royal of soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. PEACE AND PLENTY.—1. *Under the Vine and Fig Tree.*—Those that are versed in the keeping and breeding of bees look on that hive to be healthiest and in best condition where there is most humming, and which is fullest of bustle and noise; but he to whom God has committed the national and political hive will perceive the felicity of the people to consist chiefly in quietness and tranquility (*Plutarch*).

2. *Hospitality.*—Solomon's table was bountifully supplied, and besides the great number who were dependent upon him, there was ample entertainment for those many visitors from other nations. It was said that Abraham even denied himself to be prepared for the entertainment of strangers, and when one day an aged man came to his tent he at once made ready some food. As they sat down Abraham uttered a thanksgiving to God, but the stranger only bowed his head. "Do you not thank the great God?" said Abraham; and the stranger answered, "I am one of those who worship fire." Then Abraham rose and drove him from his tent; but God said to him, "My bounties have rested these many years on that aged head, and will you deny to him what I have not?"

3. *Animals Properly Cared For.*—While self-interest should lead to consideration for the comfort of domestic animals, as a fact it does not always do so. Indeed in a convention of slave owners, at a time when the slave was regarded as a mere beast of burden, it was discussed whether it paid to wear out a slave in a certain number of years, or a shorter time. Not only has the public conscience been aroused on the subject of slavery, but it is coming to be so on the question of the treatment of animals. Henry Bergh, of New York, and Geo. T. Angell, of Boston, who have devoted life and fortune to the work, have been unsparingly ridiculed, yet the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is to-day an established one.

4. *Not Wealth Alone.*—Gold in your bags may make you great; but it is grace in your heart which makes you good. Goodness without greatness will be esteemed when greatness without goodness shall be confounded (*Secker*). Two old men were visiting together. One was wealthy, but full of dread and complaining. The other was a poor man, but a Christain, and so happy and contented that the other said to him, "This is the difference between us: You are going to your treasure, and I—I must leave mine."

II. WONDROUS WISDOM.—1. *The Royalty of Man.*—A legend tells that a mechanic once seated himself on Solomon's throne, saying, "I am a king." The attendants were about to pull him down, but Solomon said, "Let him sit on the throne, for he is a king." So is every man a king. If he has little power over others, he has his own soul to rule, and a great and turbulent empire it is. He may not have Solomon's greatness of intellect, but he can ever be increasing what he has, and the more truly great his kingdom grows the more peaceful it will be. "All the sighs and supplications in the world will not bring wisdom to the heart that fills itself with folly every day; or mercy to the soul that sinks itself in sin; or usefulness and honor to the life that wastes itself in vanity and inanity" (*Van Dyke*).

2. *Virtue First.*—There were two temples at Athens: a Temple of Virtue, and a Temple of Honor; and there was no way of going into the Temple of Honor but through the Temple of Virtue. So the kingdoms of grace and glory are so joined that we can not go into the kingdom of glory but through the kingdom of grace (*Watson*). God's gifts are ever better than the gifts of earth, and the wisdom of the heart higher than that of the highest culture. The cherishing of these can alone bring honor from him who gave them, and the truest honor from men.

3. *The Hyssop from the Wall.*—It is safe to say that he who reads nature's meanings most truly, comes closest to the heart of God. Indeed whoever loves to study nature is nearer God than he knows. There are the deepest and sweetest truths wrapped up in the folded blossom.

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
And hold you, root and all, in my hand.
Little flower, but if I could understand

What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God is, and man is."

4. *The Eyes of the Nation Upon Solomon.*—He made abundant use of the abilities which God had given him, and lifted his nation to a higher place of honor than it had held in David's time. The conquests of mind are higher than those of physical force. "Solomon's court was the mart of learning, the rendezvous of philosophers, who came to light their candle at his lamp, and to borrow from him" (*Henry*). I always feel as though, if a man has a fine garden, it is mean for him to build a close fence around it so that nobody but himself and friends can enjoy it. But O, it is a great deal meaner, when the Lord has made a Garden of Eden in your soul, for you to build around it a great dumb wall so close and so high that nobody can look through it, or over it, and nobody can hear the birds singing in it. And yet there are persons who carry a heart full of sweet experience all the way through life, only letting here and there a very confidential friend know anything about the wealth that is in them (*Beecher*).

THOSE WHO I WILL HONOR; ME, AND THEY THAT SHALL BE DESPISED. DESPISE ME

BEERSHEBA.

GOLDEN TEXT.
My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.—Prov. i. 10.

LESSON IV. OCTOBER 25.

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

Proverbs i. 1-19.

Time.—The proverbs of Solomon were doubtless uttered in different periods of his life. Jewish writers ascribe the Song of Solomon to his youth, Proverbs to mid-life, and Ecclesiastes to his old age. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Introductory.—The primary meaning of the word rendered "proverbs," is a *similitude*, or a *comparison*. "A proverb is a sentence of condensed wisdom. It exhibits in a brief way a principle, a sequence, a comparison, which is valuable as a guide in life. The philosophy of practical common people takes the form of proverbs" (*Dr. Crosby*). He who will get good from the Book of Proverbs must hasten slowly, and pause to think. The divisions of the book should be noted: 1. The first seven verses are introductory, defining the purpose of the collection. The first nine chapters are made up of brief poetical discourses, addressed by the teacher to "My son." They abound in warnings against vice and impurity, and in exhortation to seek wisdom. The culmination of wisdom's appeal in the eighth chapter has always been justly admired. 2. The proverbs of Solomon strictly—a gathering of detached precepts—begin with the tenth chapter, and continue to the twenty-fourth. Here we have more surely than anywhere else, the writing and wisdom of the great king. 3. From the twenty-fifth to the twenty-ninth chapter we have proverbs not before included, which were collected by order of King Hezekiah, three hundred years after Solomon's death. 4. The last two chapters contain the words of Agur and King Lemuel, and the spirited picture of the virtuous woman.

1 The proverbs of Sol'o-mon the son of Dā'vid, king of Is'ra-el;

2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive / To discern the words of understanding;

3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, / in wise dealing, In righteousness and judgment, / judgement and equity;

I. THE CROWN OF WISDOM.

EXPLANATORY.

1, 2. The proverbs of Solomon.—Every man has his work. Moses well wrote law; David, psalms; and Solomon, profound and practical proverbs. **To know wisdom and instruction.**—The author defines the purpose of the book. "From which men may know wisdom"—the end to which all knowledge and instruction tend. As wisdom may be looked upon as acquirement or accumulation, perhaps "instruction" may be regarded as training or discipline; it is wisdom regarded from the practical or working side. **To discern the words of understanding.**—A poetic repetition of the thought already spoken. It is important that men learn to perceive and discriminate. The wisdom or understanding here referred to does not mean ordinary learning or scholarship; it consists in the apprehension of the true object, the great end of life; and the ordering of all conduct so as to reach that end. The book expressly teaches that the path of *wisdom* is the path of *righteousness*.

3, 4. To receive instruction in wise dealing.—The book is intensely practical. It ever is desirable that the young may find some treatise in which are taught the principles of right dealing, *i. e., wisdom in action*. **In righteousness and judgement**

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Oct. 19.—Wisdom in Wisdom-seeking (Prov. i. 1-19).

Tuesday, Oct. 20.—Folly of Neglecting Wisdom (Prov. i. 20-33).

Wednesday, Oct. 21.—Blessedness of Possessing Wisdom (Prov. ii. 1-22).

Thursday, Oct. 22.—Wisdom From Above (James iii. 1-18).

Friday, Oct. 23.—The Mouth of the Righteous Speaketh Wisdom (Ps. xxxvii. 23-40).

Saturday, Oct. 24.—Not the Wisdom of this World (I. Cor. ii. 1-16).

Sunday, Oct. 25.—Wise Unto Salvation (II. Tim. iii. 1-17).

4 To give subtilty to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion:

5 A wise *man* will hear, and will That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning; and a And that the man of understanding shall may attain unto wise sound counsels:

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the a figure; The words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

7 The fear of the LORD is is the beginning of knowledge: but But fools the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

9 For they *shall be* an ornament shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause;

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and equity.—Righteousness signifies *straightness*, an unswerving course of moral rectitude; judgment is the giving of correct decisions in regard to human actions; equity is equal dealing. **To give subtilty to the simple.**—The writer would teach the thoughtless to think, and lead the heedless to be prudent. **To the young man knowledge.**—Because one is young and inexperienced, he need not be uninformed and indiscreet.

> Right youth is placid, and moves slowly forth;
> And beacon lights are set against the shoals.

5, 6. That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning.—The wise man *will* hear and increase. True knowledge always grows. The proverbs have lessons for the most advanced. "I will learn whatever comes in my way," said a philosopher; "to-morrow I may need to use my knowledge. If I ever visit distant lands, I am larger for knowing of them." **May attain unto sound counsels.**—The original word refers to the steering of a ship. The wise man will learn how to handle the helm, and steer his course aright over the sea of life. **To understand a proverb.**—The book will not only teach wisdom, but how to gain more wisdom. The mind is enlarged by its proper exercise; and the more one learns, the more he may learn.

7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.—It is the *beginning*. God is the source of all things; so far as mind is concerned, he is the central truth of the universe; and no mind can systematize truth, or see things as they are, that does not begin aright and arrange all truth around the fact of God. Again, no mind is in condition to receive truth in the largest and best measure that has not come in trustful reverence to have the spirit of a child. "Fear" does not mean dread or terror; it is deep reverence; it is looking in the perfect humility of filial love to a parent who is strangely near and yet far above us. The foolish do not think, and hence do not care. They affect to be above the true wisdom, and despise it.

8, 9. Hear the instruction of thy father.—The teacher emphasizes the fifth commandment, the one commandment with promise. The parents are the best and natural instructors of early years. What they may lack in wisdom, they make up in love, and none can make their places good. **They shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head.**—Obedient love for a parent *is* a chaplet of grace. It gives beauty to childhood; and as the years lengthen, character will be sweeter, memory holier, and a just esteem more blessed, for a childhood that gave loving honor to parents.

12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; Sheol, and whole, as
those that go down into the pit:
13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our
houses with spoil:
14 Cast in Thou shalt cast thy lot among us; let us we will all have one purse:
15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy
foot from their path:
16 For their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.
17 Surely For in vain the net is the net spread, in the sight eyes of any bird:
18 And they these lay wait for their own own blood; they lurk privily
for their own own lives.
19 So are are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which It
taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

II. THE SHAME OF FOLLY.

10–14. My son, if sinners entice thee.—And sinners always will entice thee. The address is to the young man beginning to face the world for himself; even in the most favored surroundings, some unhallowed passion will tend to provoke others, and perpetuate itself. The way of hideous vice is strewn with flowers at the first. There is one safe way to meet all these besetments, and that is to say "no" to them promptly and firmly. **Come with us, let us lay wait.**—An appeal to the crafty spirit, the pleasure so common of subtlety and concealment. The picture here given is from a lawless age, when violence is not uncommon. Indeed, Palestine has never been free from plunderers such as here described. A band of these "gentlemen of the road" are represented as soliciting a young man to join them. "We will conceal ourselves so as not to expose ourselves to special danger; we will fall upon the innocent and unsuspecting; we will destroy them, remembering that dead men tell no tales; and so rich gains will speedily come to us. With little effort and danger, we shall procure great wealth." So these highwaymen spoke. And so many more refined highwaymen still speak. **We will all have one purse.**—Here was a generous fellowship! It is so pleasant to be with a set of whole-souled fellows!

15–19. Walk not thou with them.—Keep out of their company, have no association with them. **For their feet run to evil.**—Three reasons are given why the young man should hold distinctly away from these sinful associates: 1. The way is evil, and leadeth to deeper and deeper evil. 2. **In vain is the net spread.**—To be entangled in the meshes of sin, when one should know the result, is exceeding folly. Even the birds have better judgment than this. 3. **These lay wait for their own blood.**—Soon or late the evil of these men will overtake them; the wrong they do to others will surely return with vengeance upon themselves. The proverbist sums up his lesson in the last verse. Every one who by fraud, or deceit, or violence gets unjust gains, shall suffer for it. Better, nobler, happier, infinitely so, is an honest and generous poverty, than any amount whatsoever of unfairly gotten wealth.

> **So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain;**
> **It taketh away the life of the owners thereof.**

Though Solomon instanceth only in this temptation to rob on the highway, yet he intends hereby to warn us against all other evils, which sinners entice men to; such are the ways of the drunkard and unclean; they are indulging themselves in those pleasures which tend to their ruin both here and forever; and therefore consent not to them (*Matthew Henry*).

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Wise Words. 1-9. To whom are the proverbs attributed? What is a proverb? What may one know and perceive from them? What may one receive? What are they intended to give? What use will the wise man make of them? What is the beginning of knowledge? Whose instruction and law are to be regarded? What honor is gained by obedience? **2. Evil Enticements.** What is the only safety in temptation? What do the evil plan to do? For what purpose? Are the wicked content to be alone in sin? If they must have company, need it be ours? When is the spreading of a net in vain? What is the danger of greed of gain?

COLLECT.

Grant us, O God, a true perspective of the realm that reaches round our lives. May we have true wisdom; may we see things as they are, and give to everything its proper place and value. May small pleasures near at hand not be greater to us than nobler joys that are farther off. May the flowery paths of vice not hide their hideous endings from us. As we know the truth, may we act upon it, and hold our lives to it. Help us to be firm in evil, and strong in self-control; knowing that there is no true wisdom except in truth and righteousness. May our lives end to thy honor and glory. Amen.

THE BETTER PART.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. THE SOURCE AND PURPOSE OF WISDOM.—1. *The Proverbs of Solomon.*—The Book of Proverbs is the best statesman's manual ever written (*Coleridge*). The glaring imperfections of the man's life have been used as a dark ground to set off the luster of that pure righteousness which the Spirit has spoken by his lips (*Arnot*). In such sentences one seems to read the utterances of the prophets. So true is it that the same Divine Spirit pervades all literature (*Geikie*).

2. *To Receive Instruction.*—When Daguerre was working out the principles which gave to the world the picture of an object imprinted by the sun's light, his great trouble was to fix the image. He could produce it and cast it upon the surface which was to receive it, but when he removed this from the camera the image was gone. It is not enough that we perceive wisdom, but that we receive it and make it our own.

3. *To the Young Man, Knowledge.*—What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul. The philosopher, the saint, and the hero, the wise, the good, and the great man, very often lie hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have disinterred and brought to light (*Addison*). "The true end of education is character." Character is to wear forever; who will wonder or grudge that it can not be developed in a day? To await the growing of a soul, nevertheless, is an almost divine act of faith (*Drummond*). It is with man's soul as it was with nature. The beginning of creation is light. Till the eyes have vision the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment! when over the tempest-tossed soul, as once over the wild, weltering chaos, it is spoken: "Let there be light" (*Carlyle*).

4. *The Wise Ever Increasing.*—Good thoughts are blessed guests, and should be heartily welcomed, well fed, and much sought after. Like rose leaves, they give out a sweet smell if laid up in the jar of memory (*Spurgeon*).

> Through our upward pilgrimage,
> Larger, deeper lessons learning,
> May we still in labors blest,
> Never tire and never rest;
> And with forces ever new,
> Serve the holy and the true (*Dean Stanley*).

4. *Parental Influence.*—John Randolph, the Virginia statesman, when discussing with a friend the infidel influences of the day, said: "I used to be called a Frenchman because I took the French side in politics, and thought this was unjust, yet the truth is, I should have been a French atheist if it had not been for one recollection; and that was the memory of the time when my departed mother used to take my little hands in hers, and cause me on my knees to say, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'" A young minister, when about to be ordained, stated that at one time in his life he was nearly an infidel. "But," said he, "there was one argument in favor of Christianity which I could never refute,—the consistent conduct of my father."

II. THE ENTICEMENTS AND END OF EVIL.—1. *Resisting Temptation.*—It takes character to say "No." We are too apt to think what the result will be if we say "No." That is God's business. All we have to do is to decide what is right, and stand by it; and if we do not do this we are not worthy to be called by his name (*Margaret Bottome*). The junior class of a Southern college had assembled in a student's room to spend the night in riot and debauch. Amid the crowd was one who had never recited a bad lesson since his matriculation. That day he had failed. A shade of deepest gloom came over him, while he felt like Lucifer in Eden, when all was joy and gladness around him. Said a classmate: "Come, Bob; quaff this bumper, it will make you feel as bright as a hermit's lamp." The tempter whispered, "Drink once and forget." A powerful struggle seemed to be going on in his mind for a moment; but at last he silently shook his head, and retiring to his room gave vent to a flood of tears. He never drank, he took the valedictory, and is now president of a college (*Anon.*).

2. *Eyes Open to Evil.*—A policeman in Birmingham, becoming a Christian, was so troubled by the sights and sounds of sin among which he worked, that he and his wife long prayed that some other work might be given him. At last he said: "Wife, do

you know I think we have been making a great mistake. I have been praying to God to take me out of the force, and I begin to think he has put me there to work for him." That was the beginning of a life of marvelous usefulness. His influence over men was so great that he was promoted to the head of detectives. He was instrumental in the salvation of many criminals (*Evangelistic Record*). We are not going to be taken in the snare if our eyes are well open to it, but we need not always run away from its presence. That is our place if we can keep others out of it best in that way.

3. *Self-Destruction of Sin.*—In Southey's poem, "The Inchape Rock," he tells how the "holy abbot of Aberbrothock," had placed a bell over the rock in such a way that it was rung by the motion of the waves. One day, Ralph the Rover, in sport, "cut the warning bell from its float," and "sailed away and scoured the seas for many a day." Returning richly laden, he finds himself near the Scottish coast in a fog and the swell of a gale.

"Now where we are I can not tell,
But I wish we could hear the Inchape bell."

But they hear no sound, and soon are wrecked upon the very rock from which they had destroyed the warning bell (*Peloubet*). An Indian rajah ordered his servant to keep away from a certain cave near his residence, and to keep all others away. The servant imagined that some vast treasure was concealed in it, and taking a friend went and opened it. It contained a tiger, and both were torn in pieces. So fatal to the soul is avarice.

THE A B C TO CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

—*Sunday-School Times.*

THE SINS OF THE JEWS.

(Isaiah lix. 1-8.)

1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it can not save; neither his ear heavy, that it can not hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4 None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.

5 They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.

6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works *are* works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands.

7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.

8 The way of peace they know not; and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

LESSON V. NOVEMBER 1.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.
—Ps. cxxvii. 1.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

I. Kings v. 1-12.

Time.—B. C. 1012, about three years after Solomon's accession to power. **Places.**—Jerusalem; and Tyre, situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, about one hundred and twenty-two miles north of Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—The city of Tyre, in which Hiram lived, was at that time the most important city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was the seat of an extensive commerce by sea and by land, and consequently a city of great wealth. Sidon, whose people are in the lesson called Zidonians, was twenty miles farther north, and nearer to the great cedar forests of the Lebanon Mountains. Hiram ruled over both, and over the narrow strip of country along the coast which included the Lebanon range. The Zidonians were better hewers of timber than the men of Israel, both because the latter had little or no timber to practice on, and because the former, living adjacent to the cedar forests, were constantly engaged in the business. Those cedars were so tall and straight that the kings of Assyria, as well as Solomon, procured timber for their palaces from them, although they had to transport them farther than Solomon did. A few groves of those magnificent trees, which were the admiration of the ancient world, are still in existence, and are still visited by the tourist on account of their Biblical history. The writer of these notes saw one of them in 1879. It contained then only about three hundred trees, most of them of a comparatively young growth, but they were tall and straight, many of them fifty or sixty feet high to the lowest limb. Their wood is a little heavier and tougher than that of the cedars grown in this country.

1 And Hĭ'ram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Sŏl'o-mon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hĭ'ram was ever a lover of Dā'vid.

I. A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR.

EXPLANATORY.

1. Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon.—The Phœnician kingdom, which joined Israel on the north, and occupied a narrow strip of land between the Lebanon Mountains and the sea, was an ancient and long-lived nation. Herodotus says it was founded twenty-seven hundred years before Christ. The city of Tyre was captured by Alexander the Great, after a heroic defense, B. C. 332, and its inhabitants, destroyed or removed, were replaced by strangers. A population of three or four thousand still linger amid the wreck of the once mighty city. At the date of this lesson Tyre was a great commercial power. Her fleets swept the Mediterranean; and the larger islands

TYRE.

2 And Sŏl'o-mon sent to Hī'ram, saying,

3 Thou knowest how that Dā'vid my father could not build an house unto (for) the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side; so that there is (there is) neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

5 And, behold, I propose to build an house unto (for) the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto Dā'vid, my father,

and the remote coasts of Spain were her tributaries. Carthage, "the splendid daughter of Tyre," was founded about one hundred and forty years after the building of the temple. According to the records of Josephus, Hiram had now been on the throne eleven years; he reigned in all thirty-four years, dying at the age of fifty-three. There were good reasons why the king of Tyre should at this time desire to be on friendly terms with Israel. This Hiram seems to have been an enterprising monarch, who ably extended his domain, who stimulated greatly the growth of art, and was no unworthy compeer of Solomon himself. This king sends greetings and messages of friendship to the new king of Israel.

II. SOLOMON DESIRES ASSISTANCE.

3. Thou knowest how that David my father could not build.—The fact that David secured a large quantity of timber from Hiram for temple purposes, would lead him to know that something had hindered the temple building. It was not David's mission to build a temple. He was a warrior, and impressed himself upon his age as such. The association of a temple should suggest peace. Solomon proposes to build a house,—1. Because it was to carry out the *desire of his father*. Solomon never had the pure and lofty spirit of devotion that inspired the soul of David, but he regarded his father's wishes and his sacred charge, even when he had passed away. 2. *It would greatly centralize and unify the nation.* —The tabernacle suggested the transient and movable. A temple at once gave importance to a place, and spoke of permanence. The place where a people worship gathers their strongest and tenderest association. "One sanctuary, one God, one faith, one nation," "But this localization of the highest forms of worship had its dangers. Men came to think of the Holy Presence as belonging to the building, instead of the building as being hallowed and glorified by the presence." They thought the spiritual attached to and dependent upon the material, instead of giving meaning and glory unto it. Christ's effort was to *decentralize* worship; to teach that devout hearts might make a holy temple anywhere. 3. *A house great and wonderful, and a beautiful service* will meet the sentiments of the king's own heart. All religious feeling instinctively seeks to body itself forth in appropriate forms. Forbidden as the Jews were to make any likeness or image in connection with worship, it was quite in harmony with the Divine dispensation of the time, that the spirit of worship should robe itself in an expressive ceremonial, a grand symbolic garb. Solomon only sought to develop the service of the tabernacle into a system more imposing and enduring. In every age the ceremonial and symbolic has its place as the spontaneous and natural expression of religious thought and feeling. The danger in all such service is that the form comes to move on without the soul.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Oct. 26.—Preparing to Build the Temple (I. Kings v. 1-18).

Tuesday, Oct. 27.—Building the Temple (I. Kings vi. 1-18).

Wednesday, Oct. 28.—Magnificence of the Temple (I. Kings vi. 19-38).

Thursday, Oct. 29.—The King Builds a Palace (I. Kings vii. 1-12).

Friday, Oct. 30.—The Beginning as Told in Chronicles (II. Chron. ii. 1-18).

Saturday, Oct. 31.—Cherubim and Pillars (II. Chron. iii. 10-17).

Sunday, Nov. 1.—Furniture of the Temple (II. Chron. iv. 1-22).

Better before dumb idols be sincere,
Than make to God a mockery of prayer.

saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lĕb'a-non; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Si-do'-ni-ans.

7 And it came to pass, when Hī'ram heard the words of Sŏl'o-mon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto Dā'vid a wise son over this great people.

8 And Hī'ram sent to Sŏl'o-mon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

To the Jews of David's time an imposing temple was associated with thoughts of idols and heathen worship, and was not regarded with favor; but the pomp and splendor of Solomon's reign made the old tabernacle seem out of place. "The history of the temple, however, and of all ecclesiology, shows how easily the wealth of outward adornment in worship may become the grave of the spiritual and the veil of the Divine. In proportion as care for sacred rote and symbolic form has increased, the living reality of worship has passed away" (*P. C.*). 4. The relation of God to the Jewish nation *demanded a special and proper dwelling place.* The Jewish commonwealth was a theocracy (*God-governed*),—the temple, the palace, and throne of the great invisible King. There was no distinction between political and ecclesiastical laws,—they blended into one. The ideal Christian nation is a theocracy in which Christ is king. Not that he has any code of laws framed for adoption, but his spirit is to pervade all society and shape all laws (*P. C.*). We ever come back to beginnings. He dwells not in great temples and cathedrals, but in tents with lowly hearts.

6. Command those that they hew me cedar trees.—Palestine did not abound in large and suitable building timber. The cedar of Lebanon, light and easily worked, and enduring, was to the ancient builder the choice of trees. Solomon takes advantage of the embassy of Hiram to apply for some of these. He will pay the cost of the work, but he needs the co-operation of the king of Tyre.

III. HIRAM GRANTS ASSISTANCE.

7. When Hiram heard the words . . . he rejoiced greatly.—He was glad to be on good terms with the strong monarch at Jerusalem. **Blessed be the Lord.**—He may use this expression out of respect for Solomon; or he may readily have accepted the God of Israel as *one* of many gods. There is no evidence that Hiram became a proselyte to Judaism. A hundred years after this, when Ahab married Jezebel from a royal house of Phœnicia, there was no evidence of any large introduction of Israelitish faith. **A wise son.**—He saw by Solomon's steadfastness to his father's purpose, and by the plans he proposed, that no weakling was on the throne of Israel.

8, 9. I will do all thy desire.—He was glad to help forward the plans of Solomon. The transportation down the slopes of Lebanon to the sea would be no light task. "What a road it is for mortals! In some spots it seems to be intended for mountain goats only. It winds up sublime glens, and zig-zags up rocky acclivities, and passes over stone-strewn terraces—one of the ruggedest regions in Palestine." **I will make them into rafts.**—Once at the sea, they could be made into rafts, and floated down the coast one hundred miles to Joppa. There the rafts were broken up, and the timber landed and given into the hands of Solomon. There yet remained thirty-five

9 My servants shall bring *them* down from Lĕb'a-non unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them*: and thou shalt accomplish my desire in giving food for my household.

10 So Hĭ'ram gave Sŏl'o-mon timber of cedar trees and timber of fir trees according to all his desire.

11 And Sŏl'o-mon gave Hĭ'ram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Sŏl'o-mon to Hĭ'ram year by year.

12 And the LORD gave Sŏl'o-mon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hĭ'ram and Sol'o-mon; and they two made a league together.

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miles of steep and rocky road over which all must be carried to Jerusalem. **Thou shalt accomplish my desire in giving food.**—He desired wheat and oil in exchange for the timber. The narrow strip of corn land between the roots of Lebanon and the sea, compelled the Phœnicians to depend mainly on other regions for breadstuffs.

10-12. So Hiram gave Solomon timber.—Here was fair exchange, and, as is the result in all fair exchanges, a gain to both parties. A life-long league of friendship was made; the kings traded with each other; their navies made voyages and commercial ventures together (ch. x. 22); and each was doubtless of material help to the other. Israel drew her earlier lessons in architecture and kindred arts from Phœnicia. Nor were these all she imbibed; for in later time many sad departures, and much of vicious growth, could be traced directly to influence which came from the neighborly commercial kingdom, whose service was of sensual pleasure, and whose god was Baal.

Solomon now sets about the building of the temple. Thirty thousand men are drawn to work with Hiram's servants in the forests of Lebanon; they work in relays, ten thousand each month. The Canaanite serfs are brought into service, seventy thousand are burden-bearers, and eighty thousand work in the quarries; and skilled artisans from Tyre and Sidon work in wood and fashion metals. These are busy days in Israel; and we may believe the nation is growing, as ever does a people when engaged in a great and noble enterprise, in all that adorns and strengthens life.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Message to the New King. 1. Who sent his servants to Solomon? With what evident purpose? What had been his feeling for David? **2. A Request from Solomon.** 2-6. What reason does Solomon give why the temple has not been already built? How does he describe the present condition of the nation? What does he now purpose? In accordance with what promise is this? What does he request of Hiram? **3. A Neighborly Response.** 7-12. How did Hiram express his pleasure when this message was brought? What does he say to Solomon in reply to his request? How was the timber to be transported? What return did he ask? How was this a profitable exchange? What and how much did he furnish? What were the relations between Hiram and Solomon?

COLLECT.

O God, our Father, make the places where thy people gather to worship thee, homes of delightful fellowship. May they be bright, and sweet in influence, as they throng with memories of thee. May all our hearts be thy dwelling places, where thy voice and thy presence forever abide. And may thine earthly temples grow beautiful, shaped and adorned by thy majesty, and radiant with thy Holy Spirit. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. NEIGHBOR KINGS.—1. *Friendly Messages.*—(1) A life-long friendship seems to have existed between Hiram and the family of David, growing in Solomon's time into a formal league. It is better to strengthen an old friendship than to cast it aside for a new one. A friend is more to be valued who never lets us take the place of older friends, though our own place may be equal to theirs. "Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath." (2) Harmony between neighbors is especially desirable, and clashing is always disastrous. It is the old Dutch idea represented by two earthen pots swimming in the water with this motto, "If we knock together, we sink together."

2. *Holding to a Purpose.*—It had lasted from one generation to another, and was growing more clear. A purpose is the eternal condition of success. The career of Beaconsfield, the most brilliant figure among modern English statesmen, is an illustration of this. When the young Jew was jeered into silence on his first attempt to address the House of Commons, he remarked, "The time will come when you will hear me," speaking not pettishly, but from a settled purpose to lead his compeers. Not that a purpose will always carry a man to the goal, but it is sure to carry him on toward some kind of success; often it proves greater than that aimed at (*Munger*).

3. *Accomplishment Depends on Beginning.*—(1) Circumstances favored. David belonged to the earlier warlike and nomadic epoch. The fulfillment of his design was left to his peaceful son (*Stanley*). "But God hath given me rest." Days of peace and prosperity present us with a fair gale which we must account for if we improve not (*Henry*). (2) Material had been gathered, but while unused for its purpose it was useless. There can be no end without a beginning. Alfred De Vigny proposed to make a great poem, and he had the capacity and genius to do it; but he spent his life in getting ready. His friends would often say, "Why don't you begin? you will be too old to write the poem after a while." He would always answer, "To-morrow I will begin." But he continued to gather material, and put off the writing. One morning the papers of Paris announced his death. Many spend their lives getting ready to work, and never accomplish anything (*Talmage*).

4. *As the Lord Spake.*—The Eddystone Light-house, off the coast of Cornwall, Eng., was first built in a fanciful way by the learned and eccentric Winstanley. On its side were boastful inscriptions, and he used to stand on the lofty balcony and cry, "Blow, O winds! Rise, O ocean! Break forth, ye elements and try my work!" But one fearful night the sea swallowed up the tower and its builder. It was rebuilt by Rudgard. The form was imposing, but the wood caught fire, and builder and structure perished in the flames. Next the great Smeaton was called. He raised a cone from the solid rock upon which it was built, and riveted it to the rock, as the oak is fastened to the earth by its roots. On its lowest course he put, "Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it"; and on its keystone above the lantern, the single tribute, "Praise be unto God," and the structure still stands, holding its beacon-light to storm-tossed mariners (*Presbyterian Record*).

II. MUTUAL ASSISTANCE.—1. *Making a Bargain.*—(1) Hiram says he has considered the proposition. Do not make an agreement hastily even for the best things. If there were fewer rash promises there would be fewer broken ones. (2) Give as well as take, it is best for the spiritual health. The hospital wards of our churches are full of spiritual dyspeptics, who no more need food than Mount Blanc needs a snow-storm; but who, if they would take themselves out from the midst of a strong church where they are not needed, and join a feeble flock to win and save men, would take on spiritual strength and power (*Parkhurst*).

2. *The Work.*—Look down into this quarry echoing with shouts and hammer-stroke, and the crash of rocks. "I give these massive stones," says the quarry, "for Solomon's temple." Stand on this rock by the sea. Do you make out that blotch on the face of the bright water. Watch the men as they spring across the back of this huge creature of wood lazily floating in the sea, and the waves that give it a fringe of snow. "I give these fragrant cedars for Solomon's temple," says the Lebanon raft. Like the petals of a bud rising out of its stalk, and opening in beauty, grows the wonderful temple from

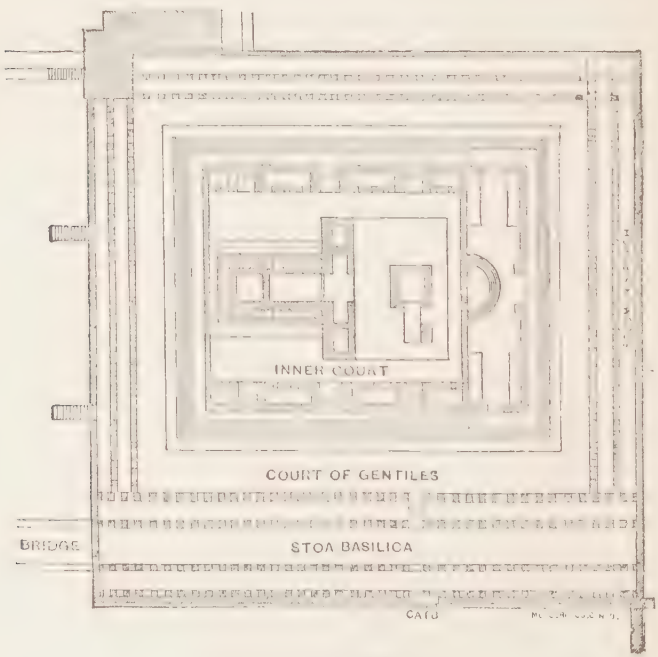
the ground, its foundations rising from the base of the hill to the summit, and flowers out into all the fragrance of cedar, and the beauty of the veil of blue and purple and crimson, the fire of gold and the strength of stone, the glittering of brass and the carvings of olive wood (*S. S. J.*).

3. *The Workers.*—Countless were they. The artificers who labored, the king who controlled, yes the kings yet to follow who should repair or rebuild the great structure, and God over all. Everywhere and in all ages we find men laying the stones in the wall of the spiritual temple. "In the back streets of the great city, in the well ordered Sunday-school, in the crowded church, in the preaching station by the wayside, among the swamps of West Africa, under the palm trees of India, in the countless cities and villages of China, on the desolate plains of the north, the work is going on." Says Daniel Webster: "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds, if we imbue them with the just fear of God and love of our fellow men, we engrave on those tablets something that will brighten to all eternity." And each builds for himself a temple: build it well.

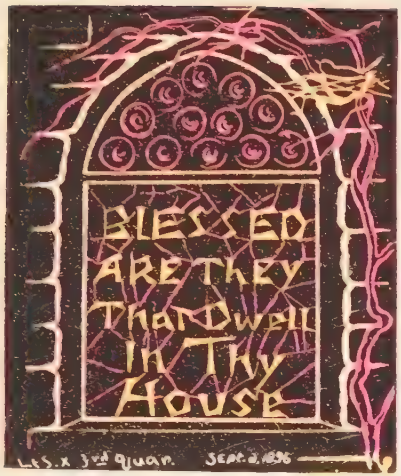
Deeper, broader found the temple thou art building for the soul,
Higher, higher lift the arches as the peaceful seasons roll;
Outward stretch the bounding confines, till the dreamed-of hour shall be
When its walls shall part forever, and the spirit shall be free.

THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRIT MUST BE PURE AND HOLY

HOME SOUL PREPARED IN HEAVEN.



PLAN OF THE TEMPLE.


BLESSED
ARE THEY
THAT DWELL
IN THY
HOUSE
LES. X 3rd QUAR. SEPT. 6, 1896

The Lord
IS OUR Refuge
LES. XI. 3rd QUAR. SEPT. 13, 1896

AS YE SOW
YE SHALL
REAP
LES. XII. 3rd QUAR. SEPT. 20, 1896

WE ARE
SAFE
WITH
GOD
LES. XIII. 3rd QUAR. SEPT. 27, 1896

SOLOMON
WAS
THE WISE
KING
LES. I. 4TH QUAR. OCT. 4, 1896

CHOOSE WISELY
HISTORY
WHISKY
LES. II 4TH QUAR. OCT. 11, 1896

Hints for Blackboard Talks.

Lesson XI.—Third Quarter.

God is a safe refuge in all times. When prosperity threatens to lead the heart away from God and into the temptations of the world, God is a refuge and a strength. When adversity closes in on the soul, and it seems that there is no light, the soul can turn to the throne with the assurance that there is a refuge in the days of trial that has never failed the seeker. God is ready to receive the needy soul at any time. He is an open refuge, ever ready, ever willing, ever anxious to give that rest and peace that passes all understanding, and that can be found nowhere else.

Lesson X.—Third Quarter.

"Does a man have to go to church to be a Christian?" asked a man of Henry Ward Beecher.

"A man who is a Christian wants to go to church," was the eminent minister's comment.

David loved the house of God, not for its broideries, its gold, its services, but because he loved God, and wanted to learn more of God. For the same reasons the Christian of to-day seeks the house of God. He wants to know more about God, and he naturally goes where God is the theme of conversation. It is not love for the brick and mortar, the draperies or cushions, it is to the One to whom the house is dedicated that the true Christian turns.

Lesson XIII.—Third Quarter.

There is a symbol that is known all over the civilized world. It is the black arrow of the Crown of England. Even the savages know it and respect it. It says to them, "This is the property of a great nation that has the men, the money, and the disposition to protect its property and its citizens." It represents power, and is respected for what it represents. The Christian is a child of a greater King than ever ruled on earth. The King of kings, and Lord of lords. Why, then, should the Christian fear at any time to trust to the strength and power of God?

Lesson XII.—Third Quarter.

No greater wrong can be done a young man or a young woman than to tell them that they can sow their wild oats, and after a while reap a harvest of valuable experience. The wild oat seed brings forth wild oats that gets into the life and troubles it. It is easy for a young man or a young woman to make a mistake that can not be remedied in a lifetime of regrets. If God had thought that a sinful experience was a necessary part of the education of a young man, he would have said so. But he did not. He said the wages of sin is death. First steps in sin are the dangerous ones. There comes a familiarity that breeds contempt. Never get over being afraid to do wrong.

Lesson II.—Fourth Quarter.

To every human being is given a choice. All are permitted to choose to serve God and get wisdom, or to turn from God and to get foolishness.

A young man facing life has opportunities presented to him to turn from the strict path into the ways that are vain and full of the thorns. He has the power of making the choice. He does make it, and his life depends on whether his choice is wise or foolish. If he has chosen the wise way, life will have honors and joy. He can not go back and choose again. He will be compelled to abide by the choice he makes.

Lesson I.—Fourth Quarter.

Solomon was the wise king. He chose wisdom, and God gave him almost everything else that a human being could ask for or expect. Solomon had a work to do for God that would demand all the wealth and wisdom he possessed. When we think about it, Solomon was greatest in that he was permitted to do a great work for God, and wisest in that he recognized the truth of truth, and the virtue of virtue. He taught that service to God and righteous living was the highest possibility of life, and no other teacher has been able to set aside the truths that he set forth. The wisdom of Solomon is the will of God.

LESSON VI. NOVEMBER 8.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.—Hab. ii. 20.

THE TEMPLE DEDICATED.

I. Kings viii. 54-63.

Time.—The temple was dedicated at the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles, which lasted from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of the month Tisri (September to October), B. C. 1005. **Place.**—Mount Moriah, the eastern hill of Jerusalem.

Introductory.—Preliminary Work.—The building of the temple proper was not the larger part of Solomon's work. The hill of Moriah, appointed as the site of the temple, was steep and rocky, and held on its summit no sufficient space for the temple and its necessary courts. On the south and east of the hill immense walls were reared to support the levelled surface of the court. Part of this old wall yet remains, and rises thirty feet above the surface. In one place it reaches eighty feet below the present surface, buried under the accumulated wreck and debris of the centuries. The stones in this wall were carefully dressed and levelled, and are often of immense size, some being thirty feet long and seven feet high, weighing hundreds of tons. Water was another necessity. On the hill was no spring, and vast cisterns were hewn out of the rock, which held over ten million gallons. From these subterranean caverns and their connecting channels, came a large part of the supply of wall stone and material for filling. The water supply was brought by an aqueduct from pools at Bethlehem. The entire original space occupied by the temple and its courts has been estimated at twelve acres.

The Temple.—The plan of the temple itself was copied from the ancient tabernacle, but it was in dimensions double the size,—ninety feet long, thirty feet broad, and forty-five feet high. The inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, was thirty feet in length and breadth; the Holy Place was sixty feet long. A porch or pillared court at the front was fifteen feet deep. Around this thick-walled sanctuary, chambers for the priests were built; so that the entire length of the building was one hundred and twenty feet, and its width sixty feet. In comparison with other great temples, with modern edifices, it was not large; but it must be remembered that no audience room was connected with this building; it was only a shrine for the holiest worship of Jehovah. It was remarkable for the almost unmeasured labor, the skilled workmanship, and the splendor of the gold and silver and other precious material which was put into it.

Building in Silence (I. Kings vi. 7).—There was no clamor and clatter where the temple was building. Stone and wood were dressed or hewn in the quarry or timber yard, and each piece was brought quietly and set in its place.

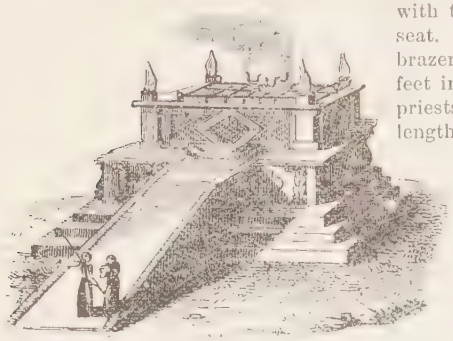
"Like some tall palm, the noiseless fabric grew."

So the building up of the church is a noiseless process. The best and most reverent work is silently and obscurely done. So it was at first. "No man saw the building of the New Jerusalem, the workmen crowded together, the unfinished walls and unpaved streets; no man heard the clink of trowel and pick-axe; it descended out of heaven from God" (*Ecce Homo*).

Preliminaries to Dedication.—When the sanctuary was completed, the sacred furniture from the tabernacle was brought and placed within. From the tabernacle at Gibeon were brought the golden altar of incense, the table of shew bread, and the golden candlestick; although the latter in the service of the sanctuary was replaced by ten golden candlesticks, and all would seem to have been made over. From the tabernacle on Zion, which has now stood some forty years, the Ark of the Covenant was brought in great and solemn procession, and placed in the new Holy of holies. A new cover was made for this, heavily overlaid with gold; and golden cherubim of rare workmanship,

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Nov. 2.—The Ark Brought Into the Temple (I. Kings viii. 1-11).
Tuesday, Nov. 3.—The Covenant with David (I. Kings viii. 12-26).
Wednesday, Nov. 4.—Solomon's Prayer (I. Kings viii. 27-36).
Thursday, Nov. 5.—"Hear Thou in Heaven, Thy Dwelling Place" (I. Kings viii. 37-53).
Friday, Nov. 6.—The Dedication (I. Kings viii. 54-66).
Saturday, Nov. 7.—The Work of Building Ended (II. Chron. v. 1-14).
Sunday, Nov. 8.—"That I May Dwell in the House of the Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 1-14).



ALTAR OF BURNT-OFFERINGS.

with their outstretched wings, shadowed the mercy-seat. In the court in front of the temple stood the brazen laver, seven and one-half feet high and fifteen feet in diameter, to provide for the washings of the priests; and the great brazen altar thirty feet in length and breadth, and fifteen feet high.

Solomon's Prayer.—The ark, containing the ancient stone tablets of the law, was taken into the silent darkness of the inner sanctuary, to be seen no more, except as the high priest once each year stood in dim light before it, until four centuries later it was taken away or destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in the general wreck of the city. The courts were filled with a priest-house and a people trained to praise, and as the music of some responsive psalm—perhaps the one hundred and thirty-sixth—rolled forth, Jehovah manifested his acceptance of the house which his people had constructed; his presence over-shone the mercy-seat, and the cloud of his glory filled the temple. The solemnity of the moment inspired Solomon to utter one of the noblest of prayers; a prayer that is humble, that yearns for the welfare of his people, that looks even in this supreme hour of earthly glory beyond the material or the temporal, that rises to the highest spirituality, and realizes that it is *from heaven* God hears and answers prayer. The lesson to-day is the blessing or benediction which follows the prayer.

54 And it was so, so, that when Sŏl'o-mon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to forth toward heaven.

55 And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Is'ra-el with a loud voice, saying,

56 Blessed be be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Is'ra-el, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed

I. REMEMBRANCE OF MERCIES.

EXPLANATORY.

54, 55. When Solomon had made an end of praying.—A brazen platform or stand had been built upon which the king stood, so that he could be seen and heard by the assembled multitude. The platform stood in front of the altar, which stood directly in front of the portico of the temple. **He arose . . . from kneeling.**—He knelt during his prayer, the first account we have of that attitude. The Jews usually stood during prayer. His example teaches that in all prayer we should take a natural and appropriate posture. **He stood and blessed all the congregation.**—That is, he asked God to bless them. Solomon presided supremely during the dedication service; and while he did not assume the office of priest, he performed all necessary priestly functions.

56. Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest.—He blesses God, that is, he has the heart to bless him, and he gives him grateful praise. The promise referred to is Deut. xii. 9-11. It is a day of great fulfillment; the rest is attained, and the place where God chose "to call his name to dwell" is dedicated. Israel was ever seeking after rest. It was the hope of the wanderings, and the dream through all the long oppression and strife. Not the rest of inactivity, for that is never rest; but rest from incessant interruption which broke the natural flow of life, and from cruel invasion which broke its peace and clouded it with terror. Jesus understood; the world needs rest.

one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:

58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Is'ra-el, at all times as the matter shall require, as every day:

60 That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God; and that there is none else. he is there is

61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

62 And the king, and all Is'ra-el with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.

I wish a strong deliv'rance, release from my distress;
Not less of busy service, but *rest from my unrest.*

There hath not failed one word.—There had been partial fulfillment before, but God's promises reach to glorious heights and are fulfilled to his children ever more and more. The constant and abundant reference to the writings of Moses would indicate that Solomon, at least, well knew and received the recorded utterances of the great law-giver.

II. A PRAYER FOR FUTURE BLESSINGS.

57, 58. The Lord our God be with us.—He sees that a patient mercy has led the fathers through all the storms and sunlight of the past; he beseeches for that mercy still. God's presence has never been denied his "waiting people"; he prays that presence may abide. The "blessing" here irresistibly glides into prayer. **That he may incline our hearts unto him.**—Here is a prayer that goes to the mark, and strikes the effectual place. If men will incline their hearts unto God, and walk in his ways, he will ever abide with them and bless them. God helps us to incline our hearts by his providence, by his various teachings and communions; but the heart must yield itself. The man whose heart is in right attitude—inclined toward God—will *obey* him, and regard all his commands and behests.

59-61. Let these words wherewith I have made supplication.—He wishes the prayer which he has made to be held in remembrance, and be a continual supplication. Christ prayed in a great closing hour for the future of his people; that they might be kept from evil, kept in unity, and brought to be with him. **That all the peoples of the earth may know.**—Here is a conception loftier than was common to Judaism; it is a missionary prayer. He wishes Israel to be safely kept and blest, so that men may mark her prosperity; and he wishes all men to so behold, that they will seek to know the *cause* of Israel's superior blessings, and may come to accept the God of Israel as their God. **Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord.**—He goes back of all outer service, and grasps the truth that the determining thing in a man's life, that which decides true conduct and God's approval, is the spirit within the man. He failed himself to live up to his own exhortation (ch. xi. 4).

ANIMALS USED FOR SACRIFICE.

63 And Sŏl'o-mon offered [a] for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Is'ra-el dedicated the house of the LORD.

62, 63. The king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice.—The sacrifices were offered by the priests for the king and people. Looking at the vast number of sacrifices, we should note that this feast was continued for fourteen days (verse 65); the peace offerings were mostly eaten; it was not necessary for the priest to slay or dress the victims, only to sprinkle blood around the altar and burn the fat, etc., upon it; the multitude was exceedingly great, and immense supplies of food were needed. So ended the dedication of a temple which, though it long ago perished, has left its impress on the history of all time.

"'T was a day in golden letters to be set
Among the high tides of the calendar."

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Acknowledgment. 54-56. What had Solomon just ended? What had been his attitude? What was his next action? What did he say God had given to his people? What did he say of God's promise by Moses? **2. Entreaty and Exhortation.** 57-63. What does he desire of the Lord's future presence? To what may he incline their hearts? What does he hope that the result of his words shall be for himself and the people? What for other nations? How does he finally exhort the people? What was the last act of king and people in the dedication?

COLLECT.

We thank thee, O God, that we can not go from thy presence; that though thou dwellest in heaven, thou hast a habitation on the earth; and that thou dost ever hear the sincere prayer. "O hearken, that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place whereof thou hast said, My name shall be there:—to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall pray. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel; yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place; and when thou hearest, forgive." Amen.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. IN THE PRESENCE OF JEHOVAH.—1. *Silent Before Him.*—As gloriously as some rare flower, and as silently, the wondrous fabric had unfolded, until it stood waiting for the Presence whose abiding place it was to be. And it came. We may imagine the awe-struck silence which fell upon the waiting multitudes as that mysterious cloud filled the temple,—a silence more impressive than the acclaim with which they might have welcomed a mighty conqueror, a silence broken only by the majestic words of Solomon, the wisest of earth, at the height of his spiritual life.

> God's mightiest forces are the silent ones,
> And those which bless most richly make no noise;
> Let us learn strength in silence.

2. *God Gives Rest.*—

> The Father proportioneth as he will
> To all his beloved children—and shall we not be still?
> Is not his will the wisest? Is not his choice the best?
> And in perfect acquiescence is there not perfect rest? (*Havergal*).

3. *Not One Word Had Failed.*—It is a pleasant sight to see anybody thanking God; for the air is heavy with the hum of murmuring, and the roads are dusty with complaints and lamentations (*Spurgeon*). Luther was one day catechising some people in a village in Saxony, when one repeated, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." Luther asked the meaning of Almighty. "I do not know," was the answer. "Neither do I," said Luther, "nor do all the learned men in the world. However, you may safely believe that he is your Father, and that, being almighty, he can save and protect you." A beautiful statue was being raised to a lofty position when something gave way, it fell, and the work of years was ruined. It was found that one link of a chain had broken. We need not fear that one word of God's promises will fail when we are depending on them.

II. BEFORE HIS PEOPLE.—1. *One Who Will Not Forsake.*—A poor Roman Catholic woman broke her crucifix, and went to the priest crying, "I have no one to trust in now but the great God." Said Wesley, "What a mercy she had a great God to trust in." I, the ever living God, am your shield—not some truth about me, not some "stream of tendency," not some blind unknown force working toward righteousness, but I who made you in my image, and whom therefore you know, I am your shield (*Munger*).

2. *Incline Your Hearts Unto Him.*—There are a great many things which God will put up with in a human heart; there is one thing he will not put up with—a second place. He who gives God a second place, gives him no place (*Ruskin*). Consecration is the first step in a real Christianity. In Rome there stands the Pantheon. It used to be a temple for all the gods. Round its circular sides were niches in which were placed images of the various deities worshiped by the various nations which Rome had conquered. That temple was a place of blended worships. When adherents to the Lord Jesus began to start rumors of the new religion, the Roman Senate passed a decree consecrating a niche in this temple of all the gods to him. But Christ enters no pantheon. The temple must be his (*Hoyt*).

> "O, make our hearts thy dwelling place, and meet for thee."

3. *Our Words Nigh Him.*—God puts our prayers, like rose leaves, between the pages of his book of remembrance, and when the volume is opened at last there shall be a precious fragrance springing up therefrom (*Spurgeon*). Prayer is so mighty an instrument that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys. They sweep along the infinite scale of man's wants and God's goodness (*Miller*).

4. *A Perfect Heart.*—God has two thrones; one in the highest heavens, and the other in the lowest hearts (*Wright*).

III. THE DEDICATION COMPLETE.—1. *Sacrifices.*—On rare occasions the Greeks would offer a "hecatomb" to some one of the gods, the sacrifice of a hundred victims. Solomon gives thousands instead of hundreds. The treasures which he now asks us to give are not to be scattered in smoke, but to go out to make the lives of brother men better and truer. We might well give millions were they ours to give.

2. *The Glory of the Nation.*—As in the Grecian tragedies, we see always in the background the gate of Mycenæ; so in the story we are now to traverse, we must always have in view the temple of Solomon (*Stanley*). The temple, so wondrously consecrated by the visible symbol of God's presence, became from that moment the pride and glory of the nation, and as years passed, the reverent love of a spot so holy was almost to superstitious adoration. All that was best in the community turned to it alike in their joys and sorrows, in their moments of grateful thanksgiving, and in their darkest trials (*Geikie*).

3. *Self-Dedication.*—Near the close of his life Wendell Phillips was asked if he ever consecrated himself to God. "When I was a boy fourteen years old," said he, "in the old church at the North End, I heard Lyman Beecher preach on the theme, 'You belong to God.' I went home, threw myself on the floor in my room, and prayed, 'O God, I belong to thee; take what is thine own. I ask this, that whenever a thing is wrong, it may have no power of temptation over me; whenever a thing is right, it may take no courage to do it.' From that day to this it has been so." Those who know how he turned from the possibility of fame and wealth, from the proud traditions of his family, for a life of struggle in a despised cause, may believe that his consecration was accepted. Open your hearts to God, and he will not fail to fill them with his presence.

ONE BUILDED, MEN TIME,
ANOTHER BLEST. SHOULD GIVE THOUGHT,
TREASURES, TO GOD.
THEMSELVES

PSALM CXLV.

1 I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
3 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness *is* unsearchable.
4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.
5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.
6 And *men* shall speak of the merit of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.
7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.
8 The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.
9 The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.
10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.
11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;
12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
13 Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.
14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down.
15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.
16 Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
17 The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in his works.
18 The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.
19 He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.
20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy.
21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name.

GOLDEN TEXT.
The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.
—Prov. x. 22.

LESSON VII. NOVEMBER 15.

GOD'S BLESSING UPON SOLOMON.

I. Kings ix. 1-9.

Time.—This was God's response to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (B. C. 1005), but the time that intervened can not be determined. **Place.**—Probably Jerusalem.

The cloud shows dark before the storm
To give us time for shelter.

Some time must have elapsed between Solomon's great prayer at the dedication, and this response. The sky has changed. Intensely buried in earthly projects and pleasures, the character of Solomon is giving ground. He is here aroused, and encouraged, and warned.

1 And it came to pass, when Sŏl'o-mon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Sŏl'omon's desire which he was pleased to do,

2 That the LORD appeared to Sŏl'o-mon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gĭb'e-on.

3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

I. BLESSING FOR FAITHFULNESS.

EXPLANATORY.

1, 2. When Solomon had finished the building.—During the earlier years of his reign, Solomon must have been wonderfully active as a *business* man. He opened up lines of internal traffic, and built cities such as "Tadmor in the wilderness," afterwards known as Palmyra, midway on the route from the sea coast to the Euphrates. He built fleets, in conjunction with Hiram, to navigate the Mediterranean, and established a port at Ezion Geber at the head of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, from whence ships sailed to the Indies. He built palaces; "The House of the Forest of Lebanon," so called, probably, from the material of which it was constructed, and because its pillars resembled a forest of cedar wood; and houses of polished stone, whose splendor was the wonder of his age. He seems familiar with the scenes of the cool mountains of Lebanon, and very likely had a delightful summer retreat there. As in the case of every true lover of art, he loved nature, and sought no tiresome beauty of dead stone and wood alone. "I builded me houses; I planted vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards; I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees (Eccl. ii. 4-6). **The Lord appeared to Solomon the second time.**—Many years have passed—thirteen years were occupied in building the great palace—since God took Solomon into his presence at Gibeon, and blessed his prayer for wisdom. Then he encouraged and strengthened the devout boy; now he warns the worldly man.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Nov. 9.—Blessings Promised for Obedience (Deut. xxviii. 1-14).
Tuesday, Nov. 10.—Stern Judgments on Disobedience (Deut. xxviii. 58-68).
Wednesday, Nov. 11.—"If Thou Turn Unto the Lord" (Deut. xxx. 1-10).
Thursday, Nov. 12.—Joshua's Last Charge (Josh. xxviii. 6-16).
Friday, Nov. 13.—God's Blessing Upon Solomon (I. Kings ix. 1-9).
Saturday, Nov. 14.—"He Doth Not Afflict Willingly" (Lamentations iii. 22-39).
Sunday, Nov. 15.—Fatal Unfaithfulness (Matt. xxiii. 23-39).

4 And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as Dā'vid thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments;

5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Is'ra-el for ever; according as I promised to Dā'vid thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Is'ra-el.

6 But if ye shall at all turn away from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but shall go and serve other gods, and worship them:

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3. I have heard thy prayer.—This has reference to the prayer at the dedication; it was an acceptable prayer, and made to be perpetual. **I have hallowed this house.**—He had accepted and set apart the house as his official earthly abode, his constant meeting place with man. The cloud of glory which had told of his presence was proof of this. Without his presence the temple would have been a gilded tomb. When his glory came in fullness, it obscured man's work.

The flower that 's fairest holds the most of God;
The soul that 's fairest shows his presence most.

To put my name there forever.—God's gifts are "without repentance." When he puts his name in the temple, he does it, in intention, forever. He will not arbitrarily withdraw it after so many years or centuries. Once placed there, it will remain there *forever*, so far as God is concerned. But the people may by unfaithfulness drive it away (*B. C.*). **Mine eyes and my heart shall be there.**—He would especially see and feel all that was done there. The Jew never thought, as did the heathen concerning their deities, that God was confined to their temple; his dwelling place was in heaven; but they prayed *toward* their sanctuary even in most distant lands. "The path to paradise leads through the temple gate."

4, 5. If thou wilt walk before me as David.—David was not perfect, as this book more than once states, but he was *whole-hearted*, and held his soul erect. In spirit he was never once rebellious against God. Overtaken in sin, and dreadfully guilty, yet when called to account and rebuked he humbled himself instantly, and carried all his life a repentant and contrite heart. He never dallied with idolatry, or compromised in the least the truth committed to Israel. At this very time, probably, Solomon was tolerating, and by his numerous heathen marriages was introducing, a false worship in the very heart of Israel. **I will establish the throne of thy kingdom.**—"I will renew the promise that I made to David to *you*, and you shall stand as progenitor of a mighty royalty." All this was conditional. God's promises forever wait our choice. Fearful as is the responsibility, we would not, could not, have it otherwise.

If I choose heaven, 't will so be heaven to me.
If I choose hell, I still would have my choice.

II. JUDGMENT FOR UNFAITHFULNESS.

6, 7. But if ye shall turn away.—This is the language of warning; it would indicate that Solomon was tottering toward a fall. "The very kindest thing a friend can do for us is to admonish us when we are going wrong. Thou mayest be sure that he that will in private tell thee of thy faults is thy friend, for he adventureth thy dislike, and doth hazard thy hatred" (*W. Raleigh*). God repeats direct to the king what has been spoken with emphasis before. He has no place for a servant who will not serve him; he will not reward men for worshiping false gods, nor abide with those who forsake him. **Then will I cut**

7 Then will I cut off Is'ra-el out of the land which I have
given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name,
will I cast out of my sight; and Is'ra-el shall be a proverb and
a byword among all people: peoples:

8 And at though this house, which is high, be so high, yet shall every one that pass-
eth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say,
Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?

9 And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their
God, who which brought forth their fathers out of the land of E'gypt,
and have taken laid hold upon other gods, and have worshiped them,
and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all all this evil
this evil. upon them.

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off Israel.—When Israel has cast me off. Moreover, he would put the temple out of sight, and make the nation a proverb, and a byword. Stern judgments. But note,—1. None of these things needed to have befallen them. God had no pleasure in the death or dispersion of his elect people. It was their own fault if they were cut off. 2. These things were denounced in kindness, to stay them in their sin and so to *prevent* their destruction. 3. There was no disproportion or undue rigor in these penalties. What seems to be severity is really exact justice, or rather mercy, to the world. As Israel had been favored above all peoples, so, in strict equity, should it be punished above all. It was necessary for *our* admonition that the chosen people should not afford the world the spectacle of a nation sinning unpunished (*P. C.*).

8, 9. Though this house be so high.—Though it now stands marked for its glory, it shall sometime be as greatly marked for its shame and its ruin. "When the spirit is gone let the body be buried. When true worship is done let the temple come down." **Why hath the Lord done this?**—The long wreck of a nation so tenacious of existence has been, and is, the wonder of mankind. There seems no spot on earth where the Jew is wanted. Every nation in Europe has terribly persecuted them. And to-day in Russia, and the eastern and central nations of Europe, combinations are made against them. In the freer Christian lands they are famed as money-getters; but their aptness to accumulate, together with the inevitable exclusiveness and even supercilious-ness of their faith, tends constantly to provoke strong antagonisms. In Jerusalem to-day they are few and poor, and exceedingly despised. We can not foresee the mighty changes of the future, but this we may say—that the dream of the devout Jew never will be realized, and Judaism can never be established. The people mourn over hopes that long ago perished. "Wherefore hath the Lord done this?" "Because they have forsaken the Lord their God."

> Tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast,
> When will ye fly away and be at rest?
> The wild dove hath its nest, the fox its cave,
> Mankind their country—Israel but the grave.

"The best and greatest wish which a king can form for his people, a father for his children, a pastor for his flock, is: May your heart be righteous, *i. e.*, whole and undivided before the Lord our God. He who elects to side with him, must do so wholly and entirely; all 'halting between two opinions' is an abomination to him; the lukewarm he will spue out of his mouth. Be thou on the Lord's side, and he will be with thee" (*Bahr*).

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Conditional Blessing. 1-5. What great buildings did Solomon complete? Who appeared to him after this? Had he ever appeared to him before? In answer to what did he now come? How did he express his acceptance of the temple? On what condition did he promise the establishment of Solomon's throne? What had been his promise to David? **2. A Possible Curse.** 6-9. What opposite course might they take? What fate would then overtake Israel? What would the Lord do with his temple? What would Israel become? How would the desolation of the temple be regarded by other nations? What would they ask? What would be the answer? Is there danger that we may serve other gods, and so fall under such a curse?

COLLECT.

O God our Father, help that our hearts may be just with thee. If fearful dangers lie before, may we see that thou hast earnestly warned us. If the way is dark, may we behold that thou dost patiently teach and lead us. If we are weak, may we remember that thou dost bear with us and strengthen us. In Jesus may we learn how thou dost yearn for us, and plead with us. May thy love save us, bringing our broken hearts in the beauty of holiness to thyself forever. Amen.

SOLOMON THE WISE.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. The Condition of Repentance.—1. *A Divine Message.*—Too often God's ships come laden to our wharves, but we are not there to receive them. Too often his carriers bring love letters, but we are asleep, and they pass our doors. Too often his showers pass over the hills, but we do not catch their blessed fullness to fertilize and enrich our fields (*Meyer*). God takes a thousand times more pains with us than the author with his picture, by many colors of circumstance to bring man into the form which is highest and noblest in his sight (*Tauler*).

2. *God Always Hears.*—We may be sure of it, though he do not come to tell us so. How much better our faith than that of the heathen. A missionary in Japan writes of a visit to a temple in Tokio: "In one shrine is a large idol, spotted all over with pellets of paper, and hundreds of these are sticking to the wire netting which protects him. A worshiper writes his prayer on paper, or it is written by the priest. He then chews it to a pulp and spits it at the divinity. If well aimed it passes through the wire and sticks, and is a good omen; but if it lodges in the netting, the prayer has not been heard." We can not think too often that there is a never, never-sleeping Eye which reads the heart and registers our thoughts (*Bacon*).

3. *If.*—God's promises were never meant to ferry our laziness. Like a boat they are to be rowed by our oars; but many men entering forget the oars, and drift down more helpless in the boat than if they had stayed on shore (*Beecher*). We know not exactly how low the last degree of obedience is which will bring a man to heaven, but this we are quite sure of, that he who aims no higher will be sure to fall short even of that, and that he who goes farthest beyond it will be most blessed (*Keble*). Our anxiety is too often misplaced. It should not be. God will do his part, but will we do ours? "We trust the Lord is on our side, Mr. Lincoln," said the speaker of a delegation to the President during the Civil War. "I do not regard that so essential as something else," replied Mr. Lincoln. They looked horror-struck till he said, "I am more concerned to know that we are on the Lord's side."

4. *A Mighty Ally.*—The English embassador to the court of Prussia sat at a table of Frederick the Great, then meditating a war depending mainly on English subsidies. Round the table sat infidel French wits making merry over the decay of the follies of ancient faith. When the talk turned to war, the embassador said, "England would by the help of God stand by Prussia." "Ah," said the infidel Frederick, "I did not know that you had an ally by that name." "Please your majesty," was the retort, "he is the only ally to whom we do not send subsidies."

I will trust in him,
That he can hold his own; and I will take
His will, above the work he sendeth me,
To be my chiefest good (*Jean Ingelow*).

II. The Ground of Rejection.—1. *The Conclusion of a Wrong Condition.*—If you persist in putting your eyes out, or in barring God's daylight out, there is no help for you; you must die in the dark (*Cuyler*). If with heart and deed thou seekest what is good, thou wilt have joy; but if thou doest evil, not only hast thou sadness; sin lies crouching, like a wild beast, at the door to spring on thee and master thee who should master it (*Geikie*). There is a machine in the Bank of England which receives coin as a mill receives grain, to determine whether they are of full weight. As they pass through, the machinery by unerring laws throws all that are light to one side, and all that are of full weight to another. That process is a silent but solemn parable to me. In the awards of the judgment day there are no partialities which we may trust; the only hope lies in being of standard weight before we enter its portal (*Arnot*).

2. *Why Hath the Lord Done Thus.*—A few years ago a number of persons employed by a large manufacturing company in Connecticut were discharged because they were unable to read and write. Some of them had been in the employ of the company a long time, and were able, it was said, to perform their duties efficiently. The company was charged with harshness in discharging these people, and until all circumstances

were known there appeared to be grounds for the charge. It appeared, however, that a year before the company advertised that after a lapse of one year no person could be retained by the corporation who could not read and write, and those who were deficient in these branches were given an opportunity to learn by the establishment of night schools, with competent instructors. Thus the discharged persons might have continued in the service if they had availed themselves of the facilities provided for them, and therefore have only themselves to blame. In a far more important matter, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (*S. S. J.*)?

3. *No Sorrow to the Believer.*—Worldly prosperity can never be the curse to him who accepts it as from the hand of God, which it is to him who seeks it for its own sake, or has the memory of unjust deeds along the way by which he has attained it. Yet God's blessing makes rich in soul as well, and to him who trusts to the uttermost his eternal mercy, there is no real sorrow, save that for sin. I was sailing down the St. John River, Canada, and while on the deck of the steamer a gentleman, pointing to a scene of beauty, said, "All this is interval land, and is the richest land in all the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia." "What do you mean by interval land?" "This land is submerged for part of the year at the time of the spring freshets, and the water leaves a rich deposit; and when the waters are gone the harvest springs up, and there is the grandest harvest that was ever reaped." It is not the heights of the church, and it is not the height of this world, that offer the scene of the greatest prosperity, but the soul over which the freshets of tribulation have torn their way, that yields the greatest fruits of righteousness, and the largest harvest for time, and the richest harvest for eternity. Bless God if your soul is interval land (*Talmage*).

You may have LIFE, LOVE, PARDON, PEACE, BRIGHTNESS BEAUTY Forever, IF!

PSALM XCI.

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence.
4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.
5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;
6 *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.
7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee.
8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.
9 Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;
10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.
12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.
16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

LESSON VIII. NOVEMBER 22.

GOLDEN TEXT.
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
—Prov. iii. 6.

REWARDS OF OBEDIENCE.

Proverbs iii. 1-17.

Time and Place.—The Proverbs of Solomon mainly belong to his earlier prime; the book as a whole was compiled as late as the time of Hezekiah, two or three centuries after Solomon. Jewish tradition gives Isaiah a part in the final authorship. Jerusalem was the scene of their writing.

1 My son, forget not my law; but (But) let thine heart keep my commandments:

2 For length of days, and long years (of) life, and (And) peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind (Bind) them about thy neck; write (Write) them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in (In) the sight of God and man.

I. YIELDING TO DIVINE GUIDANCE.

EXPLANATORY.

1, 2. My son.—A common form of address used by teachers who felt an affectionate interest in the welfare of their pupils. **Forget not my law.**—The mind and heart are represented as the storehouse of Divine truth—the varied law of God. We are apt to harbor frivolous thoughts, false and artificial notions, vulgar images; and these modify and degrade our character. We must be careful of the thoughts we indulge, and the scenes we cherish, for they abide in memory. **Length of days.**—Life was made to be blessed, and he who lives purely and wisely, who keeps the laws of God in body and soul, will find full life and peace. Since it so affects our welfare, it is of supreme importance that we receive Divine truth—the revealed will of God. No study is so important and so practical as the study of the Bible.

3, 4. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee.—"Mercy" here means *kindness*, or *practical love*. Forget not the love and the unfailing integrity of God; and let kindness and truth be embodied in yourselves. So you will ever be devout toward God, and forgiving, and helpful, and sympathizing toward your fellow men. A weak man often thinks it weak to be kind; and a small man, to be humble. **Write them upon the table of thine heart.**—It is not enough that the law has been once for all revealed; and we show respect to it at church, or carefully keep the Bible in our homes. Here prevails much superstition. People seem to think that there is a virtue in the mere act of reading a chapter from the Bible, and some go through the task as a sort of penance. The Bible is valuable to us only in so far as it influences us. To influence us, it must be known and remembered. The law graven on stone and hid in the ark behind the thick curtains of the sanctuary could do Israel little good. They must know it and feel its sway. This involves,—1. An *intelligent understanding* of Divine truth, so that we grasp, not confused passages and strings of words, but well arranged truth and clear ideas. 2. A *good memory* of it. 3. A *love* of it, so that it is treasured thoughtfully, and becomes a

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Nov. 16.—Rewards of Obedience (Prov. iii. 1-17).
Tuesday, Nov. 17.—Let Not Wisdom Depart (Prov. iii. 18-35).
Wednesday, Nov. 18.—Wisdom Will Promote Thee (Prov. iv. 1-27).
Thursday, Nov. 19.—Seven Things Which Are an Abomination (Prov. vi. 1-19).
Friday, Nov. 20.—The Call of Wisdom (Prov. viii. 1-18).
Saturday, Nov. 21.—"They that Hate Me Love Death" (Prov. viii. 19-36).
Sunday, Nov. 22.—"Look Carefully How Ye Walk" (Eph. v. 1-12).

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding:

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil:

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

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part of our very being, coloring our thoughts and affections, and directing our conduct. A life so filled and toned will find favor with God, and at last with men (*Prof. Adeney*).

5, 6. Trust in the Lord.—"A fundamental principle in all religion." Service will lack heart in proportion as we lack trust. For many reasons we need Divine guidance: 1. *Life is so complex.* The longer we live, the more we will feel the profound mystery that touches us on every side. Innumerable avenues open out to us; innumerable claims are made upon us; we feel like autumn leaves before the driving winds. The oldest Christian has the greatest need of childlike trust. 2. *We are so ignorant of the future.* Like Columbus, we set our sails to cross unknown seas. We know not what a day will bring forth, yet we must boldly face the next day, and plan for many a day in advance. Our whole life must be arranged with respect to the future; we live in the future, yet the future is hidden from us. 3. *Duty has high claim.* We need guidance if we have only our own interests to consider; but we have more than that. Our lives tell on the welfare of others; and God has interests in us. We are unjust to live carelessly, and we are not free to choose any path we please, even if we have right to do so. Lean on "God and the word of his truth," as Paul expressed it, and you shall be built up, and safely led.

7-10. Be not wise in thine own eyes.—"The great hindrance to all true wisdom is the thought that we have already attained it." There is one man who can trust himself; it is he who first utterly trusts God. Bow before God, and break from every evil. It may lead to other scenes, and bring life to humbler scenes and simpler ways; but it will bring health to the body and soul. **Honour the Lord with thy substance.**—We are required to honor God with our *property*. A man can not render tribute from good possessions by saying prayers; tribute must be *in kind*. It is right to gain property. The mendicant friar, the lazy beggar, who esteems it a virtue to do nothing and have nothing, is a fraud. But the just man will seek earnestly to use his property so as to honor God and make the world better. The liberal man is rewarded; if not with temporal riches, he has something better.

II. ENDURING ADVERSITY.

11, 12. Despise not the chastening of the Lord.—All suffering is not chastening. Some sorrows seem to come upon us indirectly and incidentally, but even these may hold heavenly discipline and result in great final gain to us. When pain and sorrow result from our own sin, and meet us in our transgressions, they are for correction. It is in the highest mercy that even violation of the law has its penalty; if it were not so, what horrible distortions, what ruinous perversions, there would be of life! Pain teaches us to shrink from sin; it checks unwise over-growths—the most luxuriant trees are most pruned; it helps us

12 For whom the LORD loveth he [correcteth; even reproveth;] [Even] as a father the son [in whom] [in whom] he delighteth.

13 Happy [is] [is] the man [that] [that] findeth wisdom, and the man [that] [that] getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it [is] [is] better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She [is] [is] more precious than rubies: and [all] [none of] the things thou canst desire are [not] to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days [is] [is] in her right hand; [and] in her left hand are riches and honour.

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to arrive at a true valuation of things—"the ring may be lost, but the finger remains," is a Spanish proverb. **Neither be weary of his reproof.**—There are two dangers connected with the disciplining pains of life: 1. That we "despise" them; think that they are the results of blind forces, and have no purpose; and becoming epicures or stoics, seek a false relief from them. 2. That we grow weary, or disheartened, and break under the burden of life. Neither is wise. We must learn, like Paul, to be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. **For whom the Lord loveth.**—The parent may be fond, but he is foolish and unkind, who does not check, with all needed punishment, the wrong-doing of the child. God delights not in our present suffering; but he seeks the best interests, the eternal well-being of his children.

> Loss is assurance of some other gain,
> And pain the prospect of an endless joy.

13-15. Happy is the man.—Even *now* the man who arrives at true wisdom is happy. He will live with right purpose and conduct, and save himself from the deeper sorrows of life. Even in affliction, he will feel that God is working for him some blessed result, a grander weight of glory. **The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver.**—The wisdom here commended is not of the intellect alone, mere knowledge, science, philosophy. It is *religious*, based on the fear, the reverent regard of God. It is *practical;* it assumes the direction of human conduct. It is knowledge of Divine truth,and the application of life (*P. C.*). Their wisdom grows by use and interchange; it is grand merchandise. **She is more precious than rubies.**—The word "rubies" is perhaps here used to denote precious stones in general,—rare gems in which men have ever such delight. As these and the precious metals have value in themselves, so has wisdom. But wisdom is far better. 1. It is *exalted* and *elevating*. It is an inward possession. Its character is pure, and it raises those who possess it. There are earthly treasures that defile or degrade; make a man hard, cold, ignoble. 2. It is *satisfying*. There are desires of the soul that money and food do not quiet. Books, picture, music, all works of art, all triumphs of civilization, leave a void unfilled. It is the mission of the thoughts of God in the soul to fill this void. 3. It is *never wearying*. Many things that never satisfy soon satiate us. The gratification of every lower desire, physical or intellectual, is likely to end in revulsion. But Divine wisdom never tires us. It is infinite, endlessly varied, eternally fresh. It is true we may become wearied of specific religious occupations, religious books, etc.; but we have the unadapted *externals*, the imperfect human embodiment in these cases to annoy us. 4. It is *secure*. The thief may take a man's jewels, but never his inner treasure. He may be stripped of property, home, left lonely; yet if he have precious thoughts of God in his heart, no thief can touch them. He still lives in good society, and foretastes the abundant delights of paradise.

16, 17. Length of days is in her right hand.—True wisdom ministers to our earthly welfare, a point to which the Jewish mind gave special prominence; and while

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

our spiritual welfare is of infinitely more importance, we should not ignore this. Godliness is profitable for this life. Many good die young; many bad men grow hoary in sin. If it were not so, earth would be to us more a place of judgment than of probation, and we would walk by sight rather than faith. Yet wisdom tends to prolong life. And he who lives as the Christian should, industriously, temperately, peacefully, and hopefully, tends to prolong his days. **Ways of pleasantness.**—The path of true piety is a pleasant path. The fairest flowers of *this* life grow alongside of it. The man who finds the Christian life dreary, is walking with his mind and heart too much elsewhere. There are crosses, but the way is still delightful if one will truly enter it. **All her paths are peace.**—The soul finds its place; it comes to *equilibrium* when it commits itself fully to the will and way of God. **She is a tree of life.**—Length of days is a poor blessing unless the life preserved is worth living. What boon would it be to an exile in Siberia, a life-convict in a dungeon, a paralytic in an infirmary? Long existence without a source of worthy life is the curse of the wandering Jew, not the blessing of eternal life. True wisdom nourishes and heals life so that it ever grows in youthful vigor, and finds ever fresh delight (*P. C.*).

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Exhortation to Obedience. 1-6. What is the great exhortation of the lesson? What shall be added to him whose heart keeps the words of wisdom? What should we not allow to forsake us? Where should mercy and truth be written? What shall we thus find? In whom should we trust? What can we not trust? Wherein shall we acknowledge God? What will he then do for us? **2. To Whom Honor is Due.** 7-12. What should we not be? From what should we depart? Of what benefit will this be to us? With what should we honor God? What will be the result? How are we to regard affliction? Whom does the Lord correct? **3. The Value of Wisdom.** 13-17. Who is happy? What is said of the merchandise of wisdom? Than what is it more precious? Is there anything which we should so much desire? Is this intellectual wisdom which is meant? What gifts does wisdom bestow? What are her ways and all her paths?

COLLECT.

Heavenly Father, teach us early the present and eternal gain, the endless blessedness, that comes from living life aright. Teach us to live in harmony with all thy laws, being true to truth and prompt to duty. So may we find health of body, joy of mind, and peace of heart. Deliver us from the artificial and the untrue; and may the life here begun enlarge in joy and beauty in heaven. Through Christ. Amen.

PSALM VIII.

1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour?

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet:

7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, *and whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. OBEDIENCE.—1. *Long Life and Peace.*—The sweetest honey is gathered out of the hive of a busy, unselfish, useful, and holy life (*Cuyler*). Peace, because if we keep God's commands we can not help being at peace with him, with men, and with ourselves. We can not hide a wrong away in our hearts and expect to find peace anywhere. "Thou shalt not be found out, is not one of God's commandments, and no man can be safe in trying to keep it." Long life, because if we obey his laws we must remember that nature's laws are his, and nature's blessings are as sure as her retributions are stern. Because, too, peace of heart is a wonderful preserver of energy. It is anxiety which wears the machinery of life until it breaks before its time.

2. *Favor and Good Understanding.*—The man who is true, in word and deed, to his best self, is not the one who is likely to be misunderstood. The man whose heart is truly compassionate, and whose life is gentle and helpful, is the one who is universally beloved. Yet if we seek favor let it be that of God above all. A young musician was performing a composition of his own in public. The eyes of a large audience were upon him, but he scarcely heard their demonstrations, for his eye was upon his master who sat among them, and his care was only for his approval. Such should be ever our care.

3. *Trust in the Lord.*—Obedience and faith! The two grand pillars of the whole Christian system! Both reaching from earth to heaven, and therefore parallel; yet as to us whose sight falls short this side the infinite, the space between them diminishes to nothingness, and they seem to incline to oneness, in spirit they do thus incline; for faith leads to obedience and obedience strengthens faith (*Tucker*).

4. *In All Thy Ways.*—

> Up and down our lives obedient
> Walk, dear Lord, with footsteps radiant,
> Till those garden lives shall be
> Fair with duties done for thee (*Phillips Brooks*).

II. REVERENCE.—1. *Be Not Wise in Thine Own Eyes.*—Shall your ladder standing on the earth reach to heaven? or is your ladder in its whole length flat on the ground? I mean your plans in life; do they really go up and conscientiously take hold of the future and the spiritual? Woe be unto him who lays out a plan which has nothing in it but this world! Your ladder must be long enough to reach and rest its top in heaven (*Beecher*). Wisdom is ofttimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar (*Wordsworth*).

2. *Honor the Lord With Thy Substance.*—Call to mind the story of the rich English merchant to whom Queen Elizabeth gave some commission of importance, and he demurred to undertake it, saying, "Please your majesty, if I obey your behests, what will become of those affairs of mine?" And his monarch answered, "Leave those things to me; when you are employed in my service, I will take charge of your business." Surrender yourself to Christ and he takes in hand all your affairs (*Spurgeon*). We can honor God with all our substance, not only what we give, but what we use or keep. We will not spend wastefully, or for that which will injure our powers, we will use in accordance with his laws, and the natural result will be that plenty will be ours. And better than all, we will be content, whatever we have.

3. *Chastening in Love.*—The lintel stone and pillars of his New Jerusalem suffer more knocks of God's hammer and tools than the common side wall stones (*Rutherford*). Make your sorrow an offering, and when the fire of Divine charity burns within you, and you behold the need of your fellow men by the light of that flame, you will not call your offering great. . . . The iron is sharp, I know—it rends the tender flesh. The draught is bitterness on the lips. But there is rapture in the cup—there is the vision which makes all life below it dross forever (*George Eliot*).

> "Life's disappointments are veiled love's appointment;
> Angels of rescue traveling in disguise."

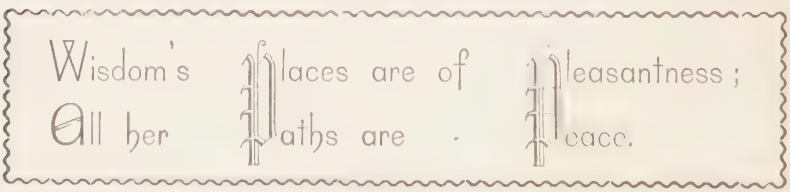
"Then nestle your hand in your Father's,
And sing if you can as you go;
Your song may cheer some one behind you
Whose courage is sinking low;
And if your lips do quiver
God will love you the better so."

III. THE REWARD.—1. *True Wealth.*—History tells of an old Roman soldier who served his country forty years. He had been in one hundred and twenty battles, and received forty-five wounds. He had received fourteen civic crowns for having saved the life of a Roman citizen, three mural crowns for having been the first to mount the breach, and eight golden crowns for having rescued the standard of a Roman legion from the hands of the enemy. He had eighty-three gold chains, sixty bracelets, eighteen golden spears, and twenty-three horse trappings, the spoil of war. Read the thirty thousand promises of the Bible to find the Christian's reward (*S. S. J.*).

2. *More Precious than Rubies.*—When the great Kohinoor diamond came into the possession of the British, it was given into the personal keeping of Lord John Lawrence. Burdened with duties, Lord John thrust the diamond, wrapped in cloth, into a little box in his waistcoat pocket. When he next changed his dress he threw his waistcoat aside, forgetting all about the box it held. Six months later the queen ordered the jewel to be sent to her at once. Then it flashed upon Lord John that he possessed the gem, and had forgotten it. He sent for his servant and said: "Have you a small box which was in my waistcoat pocket six months ago?" "Yes, sir; it is in an old box with other things." "Bring it here." The servant went to a battered tin box, and brought forth the little package. Anxiously enough Lord John watched the man unwind the rags which wrapped the jewel, and what was his relief when the priceless gem shone out. The servant said: "You see, sir, here is nothing but a bit of glass." Carefully now the jewel was guarded till the queen received it (*Hoyt*). Let us not be neglectful of the priceless treasures of our eternal inheritance, or fail to recognize their value, lest we lose that which can never be replaced.

3. *All Her Paths are Peace.*—

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness
Round our restlessness his rest (*Mrs. Browning*).



LESSON IX. NOVEMBER 29.

GOLDEN TEXT.
Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.
—Matt. xii. 42.

THE FAME OF SOLOMON.

I. Kings x. 1-10.

Time.—B. C. 995. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—The country called Sheba, whose queen now visits Solomon, is the one called at a later period Arabia Felix. This name was given it by the Romans. It means *Happy* Arabia, and it was so called because of the costliness of its productions, and the healthfulness of its climate. It lies along the coast of the Red Sea, and extends eastward thence to the great desert which occupies the central portion of Arabia. All the drugs for which Arabia has been noted in all times past, were produced here, and it was here that coffee was first cultivated and brought into common use in modern times.

1 And when the queen of Shē'ba heard of the fame of Sŏl'omon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

2 And she came to Je-ru'-sa-lem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious

I. A KING'S WISDOM PUT TO TEST.

EXPLANATORY.

1. When the queen of Sheba heard.—The brilliancy of Solomon's reign, his vast and peaceful increase of wealth, and the striking uses he made of it, would arrest and attract the attention of his age. But the remarkable personality of the king, his surprising abilities, the versatility and acuteness of his mind, gave him renown above all else. And the greatest desire of any age is to see a great man. A thousand miles to the southward, across burning deserts, the fame of Solomon had gone. **She came to prove him with hard questions.**—Arab sages delighted in enigmas and puzzling sayings, and very likely the queen brought a store of these. Legend has been busy with her trials of the king's wit. One of her reputed tests was to dress a number of boys and girls in the same garb and ask Solomon to distinguish them. He ordered basins of water brought and bade them wash their hands. The boys, from force of habit, at once plunged in their hands, but the girls stopped to turn back their sleeves. The queen held in her hands two bouquets, one of real and the other of artificial flowers, and asked him without leaving his throne to distinguish. He ordered a servant to open the lattice, and bees flew in and decided the question for him. But this queen of the south, to whom Jesus once refers approvingly, came to Jerusalem to ask higher questions than these.

2. She came to Jerusalem with a very great train.—Here was a woman with enterprise and force of character. It was a remarkable thing that from her dreamy and luxuriant home, she should undertake a journey so serious and unusual. The journey was long, her train would hardly average over twenty miles a day. At best camel riding can hardly be made a thing of comfort, and long successions of days on burning sands would try the best endurance. And there were serious dangers on a route where savage tribes have nearly always roamed. Some other than an idle motive must have prompted and sustained this journey. With all her great train of rich gifts, she reached her destination safely. **She communed with him**

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Nov. 23.—The Fame of Solomon (I. Kings x. 1-13).
Tuesday, Nov. 24.—The Wealth of Solomon (I. Kings x. 14-29).
Wednesday, Nov. 25.—"Things Touching the King" (Ps. xlv. 1-17).
Thursday, Nov. 26.—Passages from the King's Wisdom (Prov. xxv. 1-22).
Friday, Nov. 27.—The Queen of the South in Judgment (Matt. xii. 38-50).
Saturday, Nov. 28.—The Flower Above Solomon in Glory of Appearance (Matt. vi. 19-34).
Sunday, Nov. 29.—The Worth of Earthly Glory (Eccl. ii. 1-11).

CAMEL AND RIDER.

stones: and when she was come to Sŏl'o-mon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Sŏl'o-mon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king which he told her not.

4 And when the queen of Shē'-ba had seen all Sol'-o-mon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

of all that was in her heart.—The queen may have propounded riddles; she certainly asked serious questions. Solomon's fame had come to her connected with the name of his Lord; and strong souls always have serious thoughts. The world needs to be done with all this silly talk about religion being made for the weak-minded. Only the shallowest or disordered minds fail to give long and serious thought to it. No man can be wise and manly who is not concerned over the integrity of his conscience, who is not deeply concerned to know the path of duty, and who does not give anxious thought to his infinite future. A dehumanized man is not by any means a model of true life.

3. And Solomon told her all her questions.—He could surely give some wise answer to all, for even an incomplete answer may be wise. He had studied nature deeply, and the wondrous law of Israel he had known from earliest youth. His proverbs show how varied and penetrating was his knowledge of human nature. The woman of keen wit was vanquished and instructed by the wisdom and courtliness of the king.

4, 5. When the queen of Sheba had seen.—She not only listened to his words, but studied his works. Wonderful in detail were the structures of Solomon. His throne room was a dream in luxury. His throne itself, of ivory heavily inlaid with pure gold, was reached by six steps, each of which was guarded by two finely fashioned lions. She saw freely his house, or rather, the cluster of palaces which he had built; and the Tower of David which stood near the House of the Forest, ablaze with a thousand golden shields, and other relics and paraphernalia of war. She saw the rich and abundant supplies for his table. **And the sitting of his servants.**—These were probably his state officials, those who assisted in the administration of public affairs. The "ministers" were personal attendants, a lower class who did not sit with him. Below these still were the cup-bearers and waiters. **And his ascent.**—To the eastward of the palace, and across a ravine on a higher elevation, stood the temple. A viaduct and a stairway of rare beauty leading to the temple court seems to have been constructed by the king for his private use. **There was no more spirit in her.**—The queen who came in luxury to compete with luxury, gave over the contest; she was silent with amazement. So ever will the true student stand in the presence of any field of truth. Much as may have been grasped, it is as nothing compared with what remains. So will the true disciple feel in the presence of Jesus.

Rich the treasure, vast in measure, far beyond my power of holding;
So I wait for a glad future, with an endless blest unfolding.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy thine acts, and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom.

9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Is'ra-el: because the LORD loved Is'ra-el forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

10 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there

II. A KING'S WISDOM ACKNOWLEDGED.

6, 7. It was a true report that I heard.—She is above a foolish pride of race or nation; she is not the slave of envy, that malady of little minds; but she frankly admits the surpassing wisdom and grandeur of Israel's king. **Howbeit, I believed not.**—A person is not to be blamed for having doubts; but a person is to be blamed for not taking steps to get at the truth concerning an important matter which is in doubt. An Oriental will believe any supernatural wonders you may tell him about another country than his own; but he is not so credulous as to believe what you tell him of the wonders of art. In the Hakayit Abdullah, Abdullah tells of his being roughly used by his countrymen when he spoke of the wonders of machinery in Europe. Then he goes on: "If I had ventured to speak to them of gas burning without a wick or oil in thousands and thousands of houses in England, and that wagons ran by steam at the rate of twenties of miles to the hour, and that there was a road under the earth nine hundred feet long in London, over which a river flowed with twenties of ships sailing thereon, and under which horse-carriages and men went and came, and that there is a species of bird that can carry people up in the air [he meant a balloon], beside many other miracles which I have heard of,—they would certainly shut their ears and turn away their faces, calling me a big bear." This, from the journal of an educated Oriental, may give us a hint of the Queen of Sheba's incredulity regarding Solomon's might (*Sunday-school Times*).

8, 9. Happy are thy men.—Not because they could dwell in a palace, and wear fine clothes, but because they could be near the king and drink his wisdom. A grand old pioneer in one of our Ohio forests used to say, "It does n't make so much difference where you are, as who 's there." It is grand to live day by day with the wise and good, who lift us continually to a better life. A good home, a good neighborhood, these are to be sought above all other surroundings. He who does not learn to commune through books with the noblest minds, and through nature and revelation with God, is wholly missing the better life. **Blessed be the Lord thy God.**—The queen may not have been a proselyte to Judaism, but she recognized Israel's God. She recognized him as wise and good, and ruling in his providence. She felt that a Divine power was behind Solomon, and that it was evidence of God's far-reaching love and care for Israel. And God has a true Israel whom he loves forever.

10. She gave the king an hundred and twenty talents.—Over three million dollars. Her home on the southeastern shore of the Red Sea, "Araby the Blest," was one of wealth. It was so situated as to accumulate it naturally. It was in reach of the most precious of gems; and the onyx, emerald, turquoise, are still found in Arabia. **There came no such abundance of spices.**—Her home was the home of perfumes and spices. Herodotus says that the whole tract exhaled an odor marvelously sweet;

came no more such abundance of spices as those which the queen of Shē'ba gave to king Sŏl'o-mon.

and it was said that sailors off the shore knew whither they were sailing by the fragrance of the air. The balsam trees which grew at Jericho, and were famed even to the time of Christ, were said to date from the visit of this queen.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Royal Visitor. 1–5. Of what had the Queen of Sheba heard? What was her purpose in coming to him? What did she bring? Of what did she talk with Solomon? How did he meet her questions? What did the queen see which especially impressed her? What seems to have impressed her most? (Verse 8.) How is her feeling expressed? **2. A Royal Tribute.** 6–10. What did the queen say of the report which she had heard? How had she changed in feeling with regard to it? Why does she consider those of Solomon's household happy? How does she acknowledge God? Why did she say he made Solomon king? What gift did she bring to Solomon? Of whom may we learn who is greater than Solomon?

COLLECT.

Father of mercy; we would come to him who is greater than any earthly king, to him who is our Lord, and yet our brother; and in his presence we would lay down our cares and perplexities, our sins and weaknesses, that from him we may receive wisdom, and strength, and comfort, and grace. Bring us to live more constantly under the power and influence of the best and greatest Teacher; and may we bring to him that which is more to him than gold,—our full offering of gratitude and service; the consecration of loving hearts, and of submissive lives. Amen.

SOLOMON'S THRONE.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. SEEING IS BELIEVING.—1. *Coming from Afar.*—In 1832 four Indians of the Flathead Tribe, living on the Pacific Coast, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and traversing three thousand miles of intervening wilderness, appeared at St. Louis. They had been sent by their nation to inquire about the white man's God, and the book that revealed him, of which they had heard from a trapper and hunter, who had witnessed some of their pagan rites, and told them that they were wrong in their worship, and that far to the east the white man had a book that revealed the true God. Two of the Indians, worn out with their journey, died in St. Louis. The zeal of these Indians aroused so much interest that a mission was at once organized to send the gospel beyond the Rocky Mountains (*Reid*).

2. *Seeking for Wisdom.*—"To ask questions rightly," said Lord Bacon, "is the half of knowledge." "Life without cross-examination is no life at all," said Socrates. When we inquire, when we question, when we are restless in our search after truth, when we seek it from unexpected quarters, we are but following in the steps of the wise King of Judah and the wise Queen of Sheba (*Stanley*). If there was a deficit in Solomon's wisdom—and it became a fatal one—it was that it was "concentrated on earthly objects." It was a divine power, yet, as history shows, he did not make a divine use of it. We are responsible for the use we make of God's gifts.

3. *What the Queen Saw.*—The reign of Solomon has sometimes been called the Augustan age of the Jewish nation. But there was this peculiarity, that Solomon was not only its Augustus, but its Aristotle. With the accession of Solomon a new world of thought was opened to the Israelites. The curtain which divided them from the surrounding nations was suddenly rent asunder. The wonders of Egypt, the commerce of Tyre, the romance of Arabia,—nay it is even possible, the Homeric age of Greece—became visible. . . . Not only in his own age, but long afterward, did the recollection of that serene reign keep alive the idea of a just king before the eyes of the people, and enable them to understand how there should once again appear, at the close of their history, a still greater Son of David (*Stanley*).

4. *A Greater than Solomon.*—See how the elements of Solomon's greatness are reproduced and intensified in Christ. *Honor*—He is "crowned with glory and honor." *Power*—To him "all power is given in heaven and earth." *Long life*—"He shall reign for ever and ever." *Wisdom*—"In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The Queen of the South did well to come far to see and learn of the wisest of men. We will do better to learn of Him whose wisdom will ever guide, though we see Him not.

Though we gaze not on the lovely brow
That felt for us the thorn,
Though afar from home we pilgrims roam,
And our feet with toil are worn;

Though we never have pressed that pierced hand,
It is stretched our lives above,
And we own his care in grateful prayer,
Whom having not seen we love!

II. BELIEVING IS ACKNOWLEDGING.—1. *A True Report.*—A Japanese Senator recently got hold of a part of the Bible with exposition. Reading it attentively, he pronounced Christianity a fine thing in theory, but the question was, Could it be lived? While in this state he took an ocean trip. On the same steamer was a lady, pointed out to him as a Christian. He watched her closely, and was convinced that she practiced her Christian faith. Returning home he went to a missionary, and made a public profession of faith. The lady did not know what was depending on her faithfulness. Had she behaved as some professed Christians do when traveling, the doubter would not have been led to the light (*Epworth Herald*). If you are tempted to feel that it does not matter what strangers say of you, since you will never meet them again, remember that you will for the same reason never be able to undo the wrong you may do. It is important

that the facts shall correspond to the good reports, otherwise there is an evil reaction. "The good St. Francis of Assisi once stepped down into the cloisters of his monastery, and laid his hand on the shoulder of a young monk. "Brother,' said he, 'let us go down into the town and preach.' So they went forth, the venerable father and the young man. And they walked along on their way, conversing as they went. They wound their way down the principal streets, round the lowly alleys and lanes, and even to the outskirts of the town, and to the village beyond, till they found themselves back at the monastery again. Then said the young monk: 'Father, when shall we begin to preach?' And the father looked kindly down upon his son, and said: 'My child, we have been preaching; we were preaching while we were walking. We have been seen—looked at; our behavior has been marked; and so we have delivered a morning's sermon. Ah! my son, it is of no use that we walk anywhere to preach unless we preach as we walk" (*Hood*).

2. *The Crown of Greatness.*—It is, more than anything else, the wisdom of Solomon which wins the reverence of this stranger queen; and she feels that those who belong to his household are peculiarly favored. There may be advantages in belonging to families of wealth and distinction, but let such not be envied by the dweller among *wise* and *pure* surroundings. He has most truly a blessedness of which the "half has not been told," because it has not been realized, and because it reaches into the infinite beyond. Let us not forget sometimes to bless God that he has given us such favor "because he loved" us.

What shall I do to be forever known?
Thy duty ever.
Thus die full many who sleep unknown,
O never, never!

Thinkest thou, perchance, that they remain unknown,
Whom thou knowest not?
By angel trumpets in heaven their praise is blown;
Divine their lot (*Schiller*).

3. *Royal Gifts.*—According to Josephus, the cultivation of the balsam in the gardens of Jericho owed its origin to plants which the queen had brought. The notice is at least deeply symbolical. The spices of Sheba, so sweet and strong that, according to ancient accounts, their perfume was carried out far to sea, were to be brought to Jerusalem, and their plants to strike root in sacred soil. But now the balsam gardens of Jericho, into which they were transplanted, are lying bare and desolate—for the "Queen of the South" hath risen up in judgment with that "generation"; and what further sign can or need be given to the generation that turned from Him who was "greater than Solomon" (*Edersheim*)? It was the fulfillment of prophecy that to the son of David should be given "of the gold of Sheba." It was a rich gift, but the queen who gave it, yes, and all the world, have received that in return which is of greater value. So all which we can offer to Christ can not compare with the infinite good which he bestows on us.

Not ½ OF THE WORLD'S WEALTH
BELIEVER'S BLESSEDNESS
CAN BE TRUSTED.
TOLD.

LESSON X. DECEMBER 6.

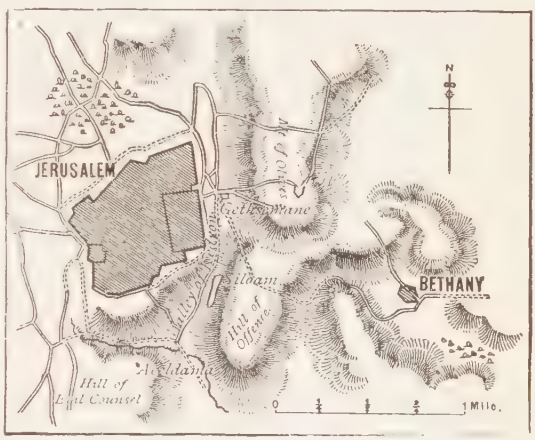
GOLDEN TEXT.
Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.
—I. Cor. x. 12.

SOLOMON'S SIN.

I. Kings xi. 4-13.

Time.—B. C. 985-980. Solomon has been on the throne thirty or thirty-five years. It is within ten years of his death. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Geographical Notes.—In the expression, "the mount before Jerusalem," the word "before" points to the east. On account of the temple and the tabernacle before it, fronting to the east, the east was considered the front of things in general; and, therefore, "before" a city, or mountain, or other object, meant to the east of it. As the Mount of Olives is immediately east of Jerusalem, it is natural to understand the expression in the lesson as referring to that mount; but for some reason, a mount south of that, and separated from it only by a depression of about one hundred feet, has been fixed upon as the one referred to here, and called, on this account, "The Mount of Offense." Really, both elevations are parts of the same mountain ridge, which extends for two or three miles north and south, and is separated from the city only by the Valley of the Kedron. The depression in the top of the ridge just mentioned, marks the distinction between the two summits.



Introductory.—The life of Solomon must be written largely a failure. He received from his father a united and powerful kingdom, and left it burdened and disaffected, ready for division. He had wealth almost without limit, and spent it mainly in luxuries and extravagancies which enfeebled and debauched his people. He had intellectual abilities that might have given him prominence in the history of the world's mental progress; but aside from proverbs which indicate strong powers, he has left little behind, except a marvelous reputation for being very wise. If he had held himself to the upbuilding of his people morally and religiously; if instead of giving away to worldly pride and sensuality, he had taught—as it would seem he might—the divine philosophy of life; if he had used his wisdom less for himself and more for others,—how different Israel's future history might have been, and how different his own!

4 For it came to pass, when Sŏl'o-mon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after
that

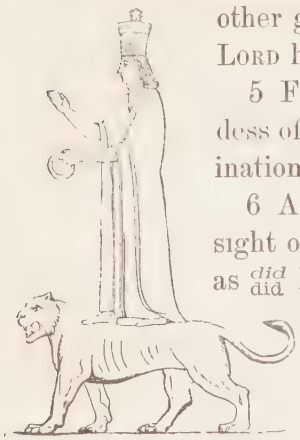
I. A GRIEVOUS DEPARTURE.

EXPLANATORY.

4. It came to pass, when Solomon was old.—He did not live to any extreme age. He came to the throne before he was twenty years old, and died when he had reigned about forty years. But doubtless in his extremes of self-indulgence he was prematurely old. **His wives turned away his heart.**—A chief and disastrous sin in Solomon's life was his insensate

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Nov. 30.—Solomon's Fall (I. Kings xi. 1-13).
Tuesday, Dec. 1.—Solomon's Foes (I. Kings xi. 14-28).
Wednesday, Dec. 2.—The Prophet Against the King (I. Kings xi. 29-43).
Thursday, Dec. 3.—The Ending of a Great Kingdom (I. Kings xii. 1-20).
Friday, Dec. 4.—Warning to Kings (Deut. xvii. 14-20).
Saturday, Dec. 5.—Careful Not to Mislead the Weak (I. Cor. viii. 1-13).
Sunday, Dec. 6.—Give Unto the Lord Glory (Ps. xcvi. 1-14).



ASHTORETH.

other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as [was / was] the heart of Dā'vid his father.

5 For Sŏl'o-mon went after Ash'tŏ-rĕth the goddess of the Zī-dō'nĭ-ans, and after Mĭl'com the abomination of the Am'mŏn-ītes.

6 And Sŏl'o-mon did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as [did / did] Dā'vid his father.

polygamy. Seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, if these figures have been preserved correctly, are enough to explain any man's fall. The reasons given for such numerous marriages are, that they helped to cement political alliances; that the glory of an Oriental king was enhanced by his retinue of wives. Over all is to be written sensuality. None of these reasons fit well to Solomon. God did not wish him to make entangling alliances, or to play the part of an Oriental despot, or to descend to animalism. **After other gods.**—If any people are to be pitied they are the inmates of crowded harems. Shut in from any nobler activity, and doomed to a listless and purposeless life, it is little wonder that they originate endless jealousies and plots to strifes. It is, perhaps, not surprising that some of Solomon's wives should have clung, in a desperation for diversion, to the worship of grotesque and cruel gods. In so far as he had respect and affection for them, if he did not instruct and lead them, they would tend to swerve him. No man can live well who has a home life so false and vicious as Solomon's; it truly was not home life at all. **His heart was not perfect . . . as was the heart of David.**—David was not sinless; but his loyalty to God, unfailing and entire, was the beauty of his character and the saving of his soul.

5, 6. Solomon went after Ashtoreth.—In conjunction with Baal, this goddess was worshiped by the Phœnicians and some adjacent nations. By Greeks and Romans she was sometimes identified with Juno or Venus. Her worship seems to have been associated with licentious and indecent rites. **After Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.**—The Ammonites (as also the Moabites) were descendants of Lot. They dwelt in the mountainous region east of the Dead Sea. Moab joined them on the south. Milcom, commonly called Moloch, is described as a sitting human image in brass, having the head of an ox. The image was hollow. When a strong fire was kindled in the vase, it soon became red hot, and children as sacrifices were thrown into its arms, their brief shrieks being drowned by drums. The true Israelite held this worship in horror and abhorrence. **Went not fully after the Lord.**—This was the king's sin. He probably would deny that he ever abandoned the service of Jehovah. He did not forget the temple; he doubtless continued to offer before it three times every year (ch. ix. 25); but his service lacked one essential thing,—it was not wholehearted. He tolerated, then encouraged, then actually helped to establish idolatry. The result to himself and the nation was disastrous; the evil example of the king, and the poison of false worship which he sanctioned, help to explain much of the later apostasy and disruption of the nation. "Solomon was enthusiastic in the pursuit of everything but *piety*. Here he was half-hearted. His wisdom was, after all, worldly wisdom. His proverbs relate mostly to the practical affairs of life. In many instances they teach lessons of trust in God and obedience to his law; but rather with an eye to the earthly blessings to be thus secured. In his best days his piety wears a utilitarian hue, never unmixed with considerations of state policy; and, starting with this inferior piety, he was led step by step farther away from God into an eager effort to find happiness in self-exaltation" (*Errett*).

7, 8. Then did Solomon build a higher place for Chemosh.—This deity was of similar character to Moloch. The celebrated "Moabite Stone," found near ancient

7 Then did Sŏl'o-mon build an high place for Chĕ'mŏsh the abomination of Mō'ab, in the hill (mount) that is before Je-ru'sa-lem, and for Mō'lech the abomination of the children of Am'mŏn.

8 And likewise (so) did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

9 And the LORD was angry with Sŏl'o-mon, because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el, which had appeared unto him twice,

10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not gō after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Sŏl'o-mon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Dibon in 1868, and containing the record of a king contemporary with Omri king of Israel, is full of references to Chemosh (*E. g.*). "I fought against the town (Kirjath-aim) and took it; and I strangled all the people that were in the city as a sacrifice to Chamos, the god of Moab." A "high place" was a place for sacrificial worship, usually on hill tops or natural elevations. **In the mount that is before Jerusalem.**—That is, to the east of Jerusalem; this would be on the Mount of Olives. No human sacrifices were offered in Israel to these gods earlier than the time of Ahab. **So did he for all his strange wives.**—The foreign and idolatrous women whom he had married. He indulged them in their idolatry in the name of "liberality" probably —a term which may mean gross uncharitableness. Probably the great influx of traders and travelers from adjoining heathen lands also made a call for shrines and high places which the worldly-wise king thought it well to gratify.

II. JUDGMENT IN CONSEQUENCE.

9, 10. The Lord was angry.—The speech of our human passion is used to describe God's righteous displeasure against sin. Solomon had been signally favored. He had succeeded to a noble fame and a grand kingdom. Surpassing wisdom and power had been granted to him. Twice had the Lord appeared to him to encourage and admonish him. And never were great opportunities more seriously unimproved, or great abilities more sadly wasted. After all, a glittering show; a barbaric pageant on the pages of history; and little more. **And had commanded him.**—He had been taught his duty clearly. God never designed Israel to blaze with earthly magnificence, or vie with other nations in the race for mere material glory. The nation was called for higher purposes;—to teach and exemplify the laws of God to man, and lead the world to know the Lord. When Solomon began to compromise, and recognized other gods, he broke the purpose of God concerning Israel, and made the one great leavening force of earth powerless for good.

11. Forasmuch as this is done of thee.—God had made rich promises to Solomon, but he had not accepted them. He saw his own way, as he thought, to the glory and delights which he desired. Now comes the conclusion. **I will surely rend the kingdom from thee.**—This message was probably given by a prophet, Ahijah, or Iddo. The great power that he had built up should be violently broken, and that very soon. **Will give it to thy servant.**—"This would make the decree more bitter." The reference is to Jeroboam, the Ephraimite; he had been appointed by the king to oversee the reconstruction of the fortifications of Jerusalem (verses 26–31).

12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for Dā'vid thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for Dā'vid my servant's sake, and for Je-ru'sa-lem's sake which I have chosen.

12, 13. In thy days I will not do it. — There are two mitigations to the sentence: the decree should not be executed during Solomon's life time, not for merit of his own, but on account of promises that had been made to David; and for David's sake, and the great interests which centered in Jerusalem, one tribe should be left to the royal line. This was the tribe of Judah, including also the little tribe of Benjamin, which eventually was merged in Judah.

Here we take leave of this remarkable king. In the weakness of a premature old age; with the murmurings of an overburdened and disaffected people; knowing that the disapproval of Heaven rests upon his life, and that his kingdom is doomed to downfall; having tried all possible worldly delights, and grown weary of them all, he goes on to his grave muttering, "All is vanity." We may hope that, amid the disappointments and sorrows of the later life, he returned to the heart of his youth; but we are left to our own conjectures, for the Scriptures give no clear light. We only know that measured by its opportunities and its results, his life was an awful failure. If any man, be he as wise as Solomon, imagines he can find anything in a purely worldly life that will end otherwise than in hopeless loss, and unlifting sorrow, he may learn a lesson.

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. A Great Sin. 4-8. At what time of his life did Solomon sin? Who led him into sin? What was his spiritual condition? What was his sinful act? What was his conduct in the sight of the Lord? Where did he build a high place? Did he build more than one? What sin preceded and led to this? (Note verse 4.) **2. A Stern Judgment.** 9-13. How did the Lord regard Solomon's sin? What made it peculiarly dark? What judgment did he pronounce upon him? For whose sake would he delay its infliction? In whose reign would it come to pass? What exception was to be made? Why?

COLLECT.

O God! May we behold that evils so press upon us in this life that there is no safety, unless we keep our minds and hearts so open to thy truth and love, that they are closed against all else. Help us to see that might and wisdom can not secure us; and only a constant communion with heaven, and a constant inflow of the Divine life will enable us to live as heirs of heaven in the murky air of earth. Lead us kindly in life's beginning; guard us gently to its close. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

"The observant reader will have already remarked in this history some intimations of Solomon's approaching fall. Among these are, first, the repeated warnings which are addressed to him, especially in chapter ix. 6-9; and, second, his repeated transgressions of the law by which he ruled. We have already heard of the multiplication of silver and gold (ch. x. 14-25), in defiance of Deut. xvii. 17, and the multiplication of horses (ch. x. 27-29), in disregard of verse sixteen of the same chapter. We now read how the ruin of this great prince was completed by the multiplication of wives. The historian obviously had the words of Deut. xvii. in his mind as he wrote" (*Hammond*). "Solomon must have known that the God of Israel forbade his taking many wives—forbade his taking even one who was an idolator—a 'stranger,' viz., a foreign woman, still adhering to her national idolatry. It was a fearful stride in the downward road when Solomon broke over the safeguards of this prohibition and took his first heathen wife. What could save him when he had lost respect for this law of God, and pushed on accumulating foreign idolatrous wives, perhaps, by hundreds? It was indeed a sad and terrible fall" (*Cowles*).

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. A HEART TURNED AWAY.—1. *A Sinful Old Age.*—The time never comes in the present life when we may say that we have conquered, and cease to struggle upward or to be on our guard against temptation. "It is not for conquerors to be tired," exclaimed Caius Marcius, when, covered with wounds at the battle of Corioli, he was urged to retire to camp; and he remained to prosecute the victory to its brilliant end. Faithful unto the end let us be, and seek not to grasp the rest that is not yet ours, lest we fall and miss our crown.

2. *An Imperfect Heart.*—God may accept an imperfect life, not an imperfect heart. He will not share his human temples with idols. We may seek wisdom, but let it be divine wisdom; we seek culture, but let it be Christian culture rather than purely intellectual or social. The more perfect and fleet the ship, the sadder for the world if it be a piratical craft.

3. *Human Ties.*—"The marriage tie may lift heavenward, or drag down to perdition." We can never closely associate with others without being influenced by them, unless we resist strongly and continually. We have no right to form ties which tend to drag us down, for we can not trust our own strength, and we can not claim the promise of Divine strength when we place ourselves in the way of temptation. Yet if circumstances make such association unavoidable, we may claim the promise, and if day by day, without a moment's relaxing of effort, we seek to rise and lift up our associates, our effort will not be in vain. But better dwell alone in the wilderness than to let human affections come between us and God. Best of all it is to dwell nobly among men, conquering self and uplifting others.

> First, on thy friend, delib'rate with thy self;
> Pause, ponder, sift; not eager in the choice,
> Nor jealous of the chosen; fixing, fix;
> Judge before friendship, then confide till death (*Young*).

4. There are crises and decisive moments in the lives of all, but growth in good or evil is a gradual process. It may be more or less rapid, but it proceeds step by step. The camel that only wished shelter for his nose within the tent, gradually worked his whole body in. The parasite that begged for one little spot to rest, by degrees sapped the life of the whole plant. We can not escape contact with evils, but we should not let them take root in our hearts. It is the Christian privilege,—

> To live on earth, and yet above;
> Bounded by hate, yet clothed in love.

II. A BLESSING TURNED AWAY.—1. *Ingratitude and Disobedience.*—God had highly honored Solomon by himself appearing to him, but Solomon had terribly dishonored God. It was not a single act committed in haste, but a continued condition, so the more serious; not a complete and open turning, so the more insidious. "A half-hearted service to God is well pleasing to Satan, for he knows that it means a sure service for himself." A mighty and noble tree had been blown down in a gale. Its outspreading roots and ample foliage seemed to promise a century more of life, but upon looking at the fracture just above the roots, it was found that the heart was rotten. The decay had been going on unnoticed for years. "Men do not fall all at once into flagrant sin," there is hidden evil at work somewhere.

> Temptations hurt not, though they have access;
> Satan o'ercomes none but by willingness (*Herrick*).

2. *Step by Step.*—Wealth and wisdom renowned, contact with the outer world, luxury and ambition, intermarriage with other nations, admittance of other worship, how each led on to the next evil, how even the best things may be misapplied. John Wesley remarked in early life that he had known but four men who had not declined in religion by becoming wealthy; at a later period in life he corrected the remark and made no exceptions (*Stevens*). As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed. No single

flake that is added to the pile produces a sensible change; no single action creates, however much it may exhibit, a man's character (*Jeremy Taylor*).

3. *Judgment.*—The German poem of Uhland, translated by Longfellow, tells the legend of the "Luck of Edenhall." The fortunes of a noble house were bound up with a crystal goblet which was kept as an inheritance, and carefully guarded. But the young lord of Edenhall had it brought forth, drank from it, and in bravado cast it down to test its strength. It was shivered to pieces, and in the same hour the enemy broke into the castle, and the young lord was slain, and the good fortune of Edenhall was no more. The heart is a frail and treacherous thing, and when it is no longer whole in God's service, the enemy of the soul will enter and retribution will fall. Keep it then with care. "Whole-hearted, true-hearted, faithful, and loyal," let his servants be.

4. *A Lesson and a Warning.*—The sensual and cruel worship which Solomon established on the hills of Palestine has passed away—but the wise words which he wrote, in spite of his later failings, still continue, and have given birth, as we have seen, to the like wisdom, age after age. Fear not to use the learning and genius of heathens, of heretics, nay, must we not even say of infidels, and of profligates? Fear not, for the Scriptures still contain, and the Church still reads, the proverbs of the apostate king (*Stanley*). Often when traveling among the Alps one sees a small black cross planted upon a rock, or on the brink of a torrent, to mark the spot where men have met sudden death by accident. Let every spot where men have trifled with conscience show us a black cross of warning, that we misuse not our opportunities.

SEEKS EVIL COMPANY.

INDULGES WRONG IMPULSES.

NEGLECTS GOD'S SERVICE.

IDOLATRY OF SOLOMON.

GOLDEN TEXT.
For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.
—Prov. xxiii. 21.

(The Quarterly Temperance Lesson.)

LESSON XI. DECEMBER 13.

CAUTIONS AGAINST INTEMPERANCE.

Proverbs xxiii. 15-25.

Time and Place.—These proverbs were written at Jerusalem, about one thousand years before Christ.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even be glad, mine:

16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but *be thou* in the ear of the LORD all the day long:

18 For surely there is an end, a reward; and thine expectation, thy hope, shall not be cut off.

I. GUARDING HEART AND LIPS.

EXPLANATORY.

15, 16. If thine heart be wise.—A man may have knowledge, may be very learned, and not be wise. Wisdom is knowledge practically possessed, and habitually used. If you have found the true path to the true end of life, and will walk in it, it will bless you; and I, even I, will rejoice. **My reins shall rejoice.**—"The region of the kidneys was regarded as the seat of feeling and sensation, or of the inner nature generally." **When thy lips speak right things.**—As impure, untrue, or unholy speech curses him who speaks and him who is spoken to or spoken of, so sweet and discreet speech blesses all who partake in it.

17, 18. Let not thine heart envy sinners.—Do not the good suffer misfortune, and the evil prosper? Yes, sometimes; but if you read deep enough you will not envy unrighteous prosperity. Take,—1. *The covetous man.* Consider all that he foregoes in order to reap his harvest—all the physical, social, domestic, literary and religious advantages and delights that he sacrifices; consider all the ceaseless pains and toils he goes through, and the risks he runs to achieve his object. And he gets his prize; he has earned it. He will find it weighted with more burdens, and freighted with fewer and smaller blessings than he thought; and it will not last him long. Do not envy or begrudge him what he receives; he has paid a sad and heavy price for it. 2. *The hypocrite.* He is a very painstaking hard-working man; he spares himself no trouble, no sacrifice; he makes long prayers for which he has no heart; he abstains from food he fain would be eating; he parts with money he longs to keep; he acts the gracious friend to one he does not love; he goes through the most wearisome experiences that he may gain a little passing honor. He has his reward; he should be very welcome to it. 3. *The man of pleasure.* He also pays a very high price for his momentary gratification; he misses nobler joys, and the power of ever rising to them; in all that is essential to manhood he constantly grows weaker; he loses the true respect of his friends, and his own self-respect; and all this for passing delights which become less keen and vivid every day. Do not

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Dec. 7. — Cautions Against Intemperance (Prov. xxiii. 15-25).

Tuesday, Dec. 8. — Who Hath Woe? (Prov. xxiii. 29-35).

Wednesday, Dec. 9. — Erring Through Strong Drink (Isa. xxviii. 1-10).

Thursday, Dec. 10.—Gone Into Captivity (Isa. v. 11-23).

Friday, Dec. 11.—Reaping as We Sow (Gal. vi. 1-10).

Saturday, Dec. 12. — Works of Flesh and of Spirit (Gal. v. 13 24).

Sunday, Dec. 13.—Cast Off the Works of Darkness (Rom. xiii. 8-14).

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous gluttonous eaters of flesh:

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

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envy him. Unholy pleasure is the costliest thing in the whole world (*Clarkson*). Be in thy place of duty and adorn it, no matter how humble, all the while remembering and adoring God. **For surely there is a reward.**—Every cause must have a result; and for all conduct there must be a sequel. You never can divorce any act from its ultimate just consequence. Never mind about being rich and great; only take care to be good and true, and you will win, where it is essential to win, at the end of the race.

II. GUARDING APPETITE AND HABIT.

20. Be not among winebibbers.—Do not gather with those who drink. Keep out of bad company; keep out of saloons; excuse yourself from fashionable homes where wine is drunk,—that is the exhortation. When we arrive at a nobler culture, it will nowhere be thought a mark of the most refined life to serve wines, and to find delight in gratifying an appetite that belongs only to the lowest animalism. The drink habit is the foe of all that is best in our national life. It fills large sections of our cities with squalid and filthy homes. Every year it causes a vast army of children to be brought up in ignorance and vice. It terribly endangers the peace and safety of the nation. The men who profit by it, and their slaves, are so strong that political leaders, even those who know and feel the evils of the liquor traffic, defer to them and make terms. This is our present situation. Dr. Holland truly said, "Slavery was never more than a baby compared with this giant evil." The proverbist classes the drinker and the glutton together. Both give themselves up to the gratification of a low appetite; and men must be more than animals, or worse.

21. The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.—The man who goes among wine drinkers becomes a drunkard. Men may talk about "moderate drinking," but drunkenness is the common, the natural, and the logical end. The low sensualist comes to poverty, poverty in all things—fortune, reputation, character. The man who "dissipates" simply shatters and scatters and wastes his manhood. The drunkard is not to be pictured as a proud ship wrecked in wild storm on a dangerous reef; he will rather be found an old and useless hulk, water-logged, and sinking to measureless depths in mid-ocean. **And drowsiness shall clothe with rags.**—In brain or body an intemperate man is unfit for work. His brain is clouded, his body clogged. Laziness and debauchery act and react on each other. The indolent and unoccupied man seeks abnormal gratification; and the debauchee is drowsy and indolent. It is one of those cases where a man gets to going wrong, and seesaws down to hell. "High wages" is not the most essential thing to a young person; it is a matter of much greater concern to be *usefully* and *healthfully employed*. Habit is everything in life. Ruskin says, The human soul in youth is not a machine of which you can polish the cogs, and having got it into working order, start your immortal locomotive at twenty-five years old or thirty, express from the Strait Gate on the Narrow Road. The whole of youth is one essentially of formation, edification, instruction; in taking in of stores, establishment in vital habits, hopes and faiths. There is not an hour of it but is trembling with destinies; not a moment of which, once past, the appointed work can ever be done again, or the neglected work struck on the cold iron.

> Is thy soul beautiful? Thy home shall be
> In beauty. Hast thou loved below thyself?
> To thy desire those shall descend; and life
> Knows less of change as it goes farther on.

23 Buy the truth, and sell it[it] not; also[also] wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child[child] shall have joy of him.

25 Thy[Let thy] father and thy mother shall[shall] be glad, and she[let her] that bare thee shall[shall] rejoice.

III. SAFEGUARDS OF YOUTH.

22. Hearken unto thy father.—The parent may not be greatly wise, but the parent has learned life's elementary lesson, and intensely desires the welfare of the child; and the child that does not regard the parent, and is not teachable, is already headstrong on the road to ruin. The child that fails to learn to obey the parent, fails to learn life's first essential lesson, and it is hard ever to make up for it. **Despise not thy mother.**—O Solomon! Could any one who ever might hear your words, despise his mother? Many a time a gray-haired man has thrown himself beside a mound where the grass has grown green for many years, and sobbed like a child over memories of her who slept beneath. Still, while parents live, we may be careless or neglectful. Too often we miss life's sweetest experiences. Constant and considerate kindness begets pure and abiding love; and an ardent and holy love begets the highest joy known either in earth or heaven.

23-35. Buy the truth and sell it not.—In one sense truth is free, as air and water are free. The truth of the gospel is free; he may take it who will. Yet all truth may be said to have its price. The great facts or truths of life we learn by experiences that involve toil and disappointment. The truths of revelation we learn by self-restraint and application to the study of the Scriptures. The truths of a Christian experience we learn by self-denial and consecration. Truth is free, but it takes some effort on our part to appropriate it. Whatever the cost, find the truth, and adjust life to it. Truth that concerns us is the true world that lies round about our souls. In proportion as we find it do we really enter into life. **The father of the righteous.**—True love to a parent is a powerful incentive to a good life. For the parent has no higher joy of earth than to see children controlled by wisdom, and assured to honor and usefulness. These help, above all else of earth, to bring the gray-haired parent in sweet content to life's peaceful close.

EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE.—In all the towns and countries I have seen, I never saw a city or village yet whose miseries were not in proportion to the number of its public houses. All houses are ever an occasion of debauchery and excess, and either in a political or religious light, it would be our highest interest to have them suppressed (*Oliver Goldsmith*). Intemperance can not be cured by general legislation or by sermons. The rum seller is the root of the evil; until it is made a crime to sell intoxicating beverages, intemperance will continue to exist (*Wendell Phillips*). The liquor traffic is the awful heritage of a less wise, less kind, and less enlightened past. For its existence in this gentler age we are all more or less responsible. Let us combine to put it away "with malice toward none, with charity for all" (*Miss Willard*).

In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
An injury, an outrage; and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine (*Milton*).

POINTS TO NOTE.

1. Right Thought and Speech. 15-19. What will make the heart of a guardian of youth rejoice? What would be the evidence that the heart is wise? What feeling should one never have toward sinners? Why should we fear the Lord? What should the young especially guide? **2. Pure Life.** 20, 21. With whom should we not associate? Does this imply temperance in other things than intoxicating liquors? What shall be the result of these evils? **3. Filial Piety.** 22-25. What should be the conduct and feeling of the young toward parents? What should we seek and retain? What will be the feeling of the parents of a wise and dutiful child?

COLLECT.

Father in Heaven, wilt thou enlighten the degraded minds and darkened consciences of men, until those who tread the downward path, and those who incite and tempt them to it, may understand the work they do. Make cruelty to become weak, and shrewdness in evil, folly. Drive to madness and destruction the men who will not be saved, nor let their brethren go. Break the power of low appetites by a thirst for nobler joys. May there be a universal hungering for righteousness, and may the kingdom of heaven be established on all the hills, and in all the hearts of earth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

YE who would have your features florid,
Lithe limbs, bright eyes, unwrinkled forehead,
From age's devastation horrid,
Adopt this plan,—
'T will make, in climate cold or torrid,
A hale old man:

Avoid in youth luxurious diet,
Restrain the passions' lawless riot;
Devoted to domestic quiet,
Be wisely gay;
So shall ye, spite of age's fiat,
Resist decay.

Seek not in Mammon's worship pleasure,
But find your richest, dearest treasure
In God, his Word, his work, not leisure;
The mind, not sense,
Is the sole scale by which to measure
Your opulence.

This is the solace, this the science,
Life's purest, sweetest, best appliance,
That disappoints not man's reliance
Whate'er his state;
But challenges, with calm defiance,
Time, fortune, fate (*Horace Smith*).

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. TRUE IN HEART.—1. *Speaking Right Things.*—We need to guard our words, and no less our thoughts, that we may not even in thoughtlessness hurt, or mislead, another. Colonel John Trumbull, of Connecticut, used to relate the following of himself: An old Mohegan king, named Zachary, used to dine annually with his father, then Governor of the state. This Indian king had been a great drunkard, but had reformed. The boy John, thinking that he would test him, said: "Zachary, this beer is excellent; will you taste it?" The old man dropped his knife, his black eyes sparkling with indignation, as he said: "John, do you know what you are doing? You are serving the devil. I tell you that if I should but taste that beer, I could not stop until I got to ruin, and become again the drunken, contemptible wretch your father remembers me to have been. John, while you live never tempt a man to break a good resolution."

2. *Sinners Are Not to be Envied.*—The discoverer of alcohol, in the Middle Ages, is related to have killed himself by drinking it, supposing it to be the long sought elixir of life. Such the result of drinking too deep of the cup of worldly pleasure. Lord Byron, in the last year of his life, wrote: "I have been counting up the really happy days of my life. I find only eleven, and I doubt whether I shall make up a round dozen before I die." Had he lived for God, and not for pleasure, he could have told a different story (*S. S. J.*).

3. *The End Shall Come.*—The bells cast by the famous molder, Van der Gheyn, of Louvain, are said to have lost all the sweetness they had a hundred years ago.

"So when you plead that life is still
Full, as of old, with tingling joy,—
That I may hear its music thrill
Just as I heard it when a boy;—

All I can say is—Youth has passed—
Master of magic falls and swells,—
Bearing away the cunning cast
Into the molding of the bells."

So a course of sin takes all the sweet harmonies out of life, but the soul that is true grows more and more as the years pass, into the rhythm and tune of the heavenly harmonies, until the end shall be but the beginning of the song, for which this was only the prelude.

II. PURE IN BODY.—1. *Indulging the Appetite.*—Heliogabalus used to bring those of whom he wished to rid himself into a dining-room, which had a deceitful floor, and then cause them to fall and be destroyed. A true type of our indulgence of appetite in any way, since whatever makes the body impure tends to destroy it, and to drag down the soul. "If we wish a mirror to reflect the sun, do we turn it toward the earth?"

2. *Coming to Poverty.*—A laborer dreamed of seeing four rats coming toward him: one fat, two lean, and the last one blind. To dream of rats is supposed to be an omen of evil, so the man was much disturbed as to the meaning of his dream. His son, a bright lad, offered to explain it. "The fat rat," said he, "is the man who keeps the public house, where you go so often; the two lean ones are me and mother; the blind one is yourself, father." A man, poor and old, with a bottle sticking out of his pocket, was overtaken by a physician on the road. Pointing ahead, he asked, "Is that the way to the poor-house?" "No," replied the physician, pointing to the whisky bottle, "but that is" (*S. S. J.*).

3. *The Curse Perpetuated.*—There is much said of wise sons in the lesson. There is need also of wise fathers. Many a man sits down to write his will, and says, "In the name of God, Amen. I will and bequeath to my children my property, share and share alike. Signed and sealed in presence of witnesses." But he does not know that he is at the same time making a double will, and that he might say, "In the name of disease and sorrow and death, Amen. I will and bequeath to my children my appetite for drink, and my prospects of a drunkard's grave. Signed and sealed in the presence of the astonished hosts of heaven and the jubilant harpies of hell" (*Talmage*).

III. WISE IN ACT.—1. *Honoring Parents.*—The Dean of Canterbury, afterward Archbishop Tillotson, was visited by a plain old Yorkshireman, who approached the house and asked the servant if John Tillotson was at home. The servant, indignant at what he thought his insolence, was about to drive him away, when the dean, who happened to be within hearing, came out, exclaiming, "It is my beloved father!" and falling on his knees asked for his blessing. Similarly Will Carlton, in one of his poems, tells the story of a man's rise to success in life, while his wife, in toiling and denying herself to give him every opportunity, has grown old, worn, and unattractive. His friends hinted that she was but a burden to him, and that he would be better off without her; but he felt that God, who looked for worth and beauty in the heart, would give her a place above him, and that he could do no less than to give her loyalty and honor.

2. *Buy the Truth.*—Men are anxious to buy almost everything else. The lower takes up too much of life. These men remind us of the old story in Strabo of the musician who thought himself holding his audience spell-bound as he poured forth his notes; but just then the market bell with its tinkle was heard, and all his admirers, except one, left him to trade at the market. The musician turned to his solitary listener and complimented him on having a soul above mere merchandise, so that he was not drawn away by the market bell. "Master," said the man, "I am hard of hearing; did you say the market bell had rung?" "Yes!" "Then I must be off." So when we preach of Jesus Christ there will be some who will listen to us, but, ah! to-morrow's market bell of sin, the bell that rings to frivolities and rings to transgressions, they will go after that (*Spurgeon*).

THERE WILL BE STORM / SORROW DANGER / DEATH UNTIL INTEMPERANCE / INIQUITY IS DONE AWAY.

YOUR PROSPECT OF LIVING, IF

A DRINKER, AT—		A TEETOTALER, AT—	
20 is	15 3-5 years.	20 is	44 1-5 years.
30 is	13 4-5 "	30 is	36 1-2 "
40 is	11 3-5 "	40 is	28 1-5 "
50 is	10 4-5 "	50 is	21 1-4 "
60 is	8 9-10 "	60 is	14 1-4 "
5)	60 *plus* years.	5)	145 years.

Average, 12 years, much less than half of 29 years (average),

—*From Neison's Vital Statistics.*

OF EQUAL NUMBER OF BOTH CLASSES THERE DIE ANNUALLY,

		DRINKERS.	TEETOTALERS.
15—20	years of age	18	10
20—30	" "	51	10
30—40	" "	42	10
40—50	" "	41	10
50—60	" "	29	10
15—60		5)181	50
		36 *plus*	10

—*From Dr. Edward Jarvis' Statistical Tables.*

LESSON XII. DECEMBER 20.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Matthew ii. 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.
And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
—Luke ii. 10.

Time.—Christ was born four years before the date we give to his birth. When our Christian chronology was adopted, a mistake was made in the reckoning, which has ever since been followed. **Places.**—Jerusalem, and Bethlehem.

1 Now when Jē'sus was born in Bĕth'lĕ-hēm of Jū-dæ'a in the days of Hĕr'od the king, behold, there came wise men from the east came to Je-ru'sa-lĕm,

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 When And when Hĕr'od the king had heard these things, it, he was troubled, and all Je-ru'sa-lĕm with him.

SCENE IN NAZARETH.

I. WISE MEN AND THE STAR.

EXPLANATORY.

1. Now when Jesus was born.—The home of Joseph, and his espoused wife Mary, was at Nazareth, about seventy miles north of Jerusalem; but an enrollment or census-taking brought them to the city of their fathers for registration. So they came to Bethlehem; and there Jesus was born, of heavenly Fatherhood and earthly motherhood. "An incomprehensible condescension of the Divine," says the skeptic. Nay, rather say, it is an incomprehensible lifting up of the human. So near as God to man, so near is man to God. From the far east, beyond the Euphrates, came wise men, the philosophers and sages of their realm, to Jerusalem.

2. Where is he that is born King?—Such was the question of the wise men. The world widely was expecting a great king to arise in Judæa. The scattered prophecies, and the expectations of the Jews, had doubtless helped to create the expectation. But the hungering of the nobler hearts, and the sense of sore need of a heaven-sent teacher also had much to do with it. These astrologers, who were the first astronomers, had seen a star which spoke of a king beneath it. It would seem they did not strictly follow the star; they thought they must diverge and consult the king and wise priests at Jerusalem.

3-6. When Herod the king heard.—This was Herod the Great, the first king of the name He was now old, jealous in the extreme, and if possible more merciless than ever. He knew he was hated by his people; and they had reason to fear for their king and themselves if he should discern the rising of a rival royalty. **Gathering together all the chief priests.**—The priests who served at the temple were divided into twenty-four

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Dec. 14.—The Birth of Christ (Matt. ii. 1-12).
Tuesday, Dec. 15.—The Prince of Peace (Isa. ix. 1-6).
Wednesday, Dec. 16.—Good Tidings (Isa. xl. 1-11).
Thursday, Dec. 17.—The Word Made Flesh (John i. 1-14).
Friday, Dec. 18.—The Mind of Christ Jesus (Phil. ii. 1-11).
Saturday, Dec. 19.—The Life-giver (II. Tim. ii. 1-13).
Sunday, Dec. 20.—Herein is Love I. John iv. 1-15.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bĕth'lĕ-hĕm of Jū-dæ'a: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Bĕth'lĕ-hĕm, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Is'ra-el.

7 Then Hĕr'od, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired and learned of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bĕth'lĕ-hĕm, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, again, that I also may come and worship him.

9 When they had And they, having heard the king, they departed; went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

BETHLEHEM.

courses, which served one week each in due succession. The chief priests were probably the heads of these classes. The scribes were the lawyers or expounders of the law. Herod had some knowledge of prophecy, for though an Idumean, he was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and had rebuilt the temple magnificently. He asked where *the Christ* should be born. The doctors of the law seem to have understood the subject well, and to have answered without hesitation. They quote freely from the Septuagint version of Micah v. 2.

> O Bethlehem! thou art not least,
> 'Mid Judah's prices honored well:
> From thee the Princeliest shall come,
> The Shepherd of my Israel.

Geikie closes his Life of Christ with a beautiful quotation: "Earth, thou grain of sand on the shore of the Universe of God; thou Bethlehem, amongst the princely cities of the heavens; thou art, and remainest, the Loved One amongst ten thousand suns and worlds, the Chosen of God! Thee will he again visit, and there thou wilt prepare a throne for him, as thou gavest him a manger-cradle; in his radiant glory wilt thou rejoice, as thou didst once drink his blood and his tears, and mourn his death! On thee has the Lord a great work to complete!"

II. WISE MEN AND THE KING.

7, 8. Herod privily called the wise men.—It would seem that the shrewd old despot were already planning for one of those slaughters in which he loved so well to indulge. He wished to know the age of the infant whom he must seek and slay. **He sent them to Bethlehem.**—Less than six miles away. Amid scores of infants, much alike in obscurity, it might be hard to tell which would prove to be the Christ. Herod would have them search him out, and bring back word, that he might worship! His bow would be the beck of death.

> "If still the Blessed One has murderers,
> They will be found among false worshipers."

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

10 When / And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come / they came into the house, they / and saw the young child with Mā'ry his mother, and they / fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened / opening their treasures, they presented / offered unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God / of God in a dream that they should not return to Hĕr'od, they departed into their own country another way.

9–11. Lo, the star which they saw:—When they were in a mood to leave worldly wisdom behind, and attend to the star, it was ready to guide them again. It rested over a humble home in Bethlehem, and brought them to the presence of a simple babe, a king indeed uncrowned. **They came into the house.**—Joseph and Mary abode in Bethlehem for forty days, and were now probably comfortably housed. The shepherds visited the babe in the stable; but the wise men came later. **They fell down and worshipped.**—They did not go out to proclaim the king, that was not their work; but they bowed before him and gave homage; and they did more,—they paid him tribute, the richest they could give, and gifts which befitted a king.

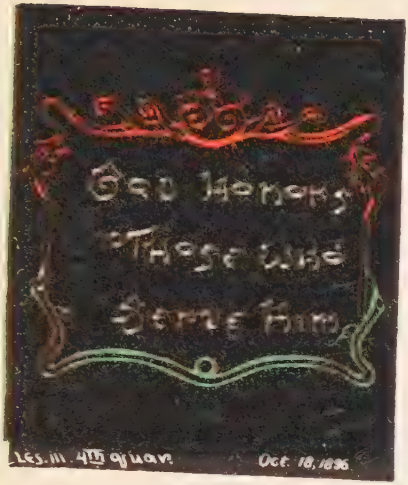
POINTS TO NOTE.

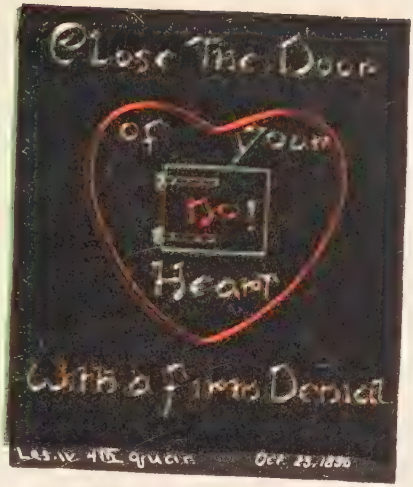
1. Seeking. 1–8. Name the place and time of the birth of Jesus? Who came inquiring for him? What title did they give him? What sign had brought them on this journey? What was the general expectation among the nations of the east at this time? How did Herod receive the announcement of the wise men? What did he do? What was the prophecy quoted by the priests and scribes? What did Herod take care to ascertain from the wise men? What did he direct them to do? **2. Finding.** 9–12. What guidance did they have besides this prophecy? Where did the star finally rest? With what feeling did the wise men see it? What was their first act upon seeing the child whom they sought? What did they offer to him? What warning did they have? What did they do in consequence of this?

COLLECT.

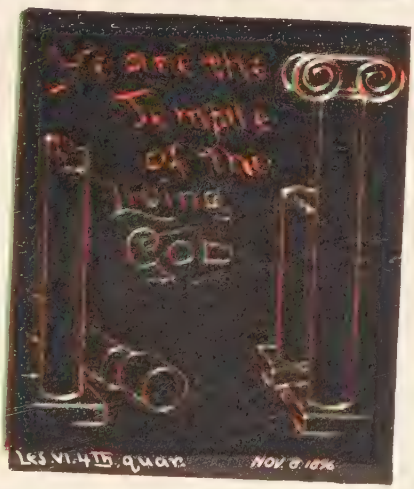
We do praise thee our Father, that man is so akin to thee, that the Son of the Highest, the Prince of Life, and Lord of Glory, could clothe himself in our humanity. We praise thee for the Babe of Bethlehem, with the eye of faith may we behold his star, and come and worship him. May his life grow within our hearts and minds, until we are pervaded and filled with his wisdom and his love. May he be born to us, our light, our life, our hope, our joy, forever and forever. Amen. Amen.

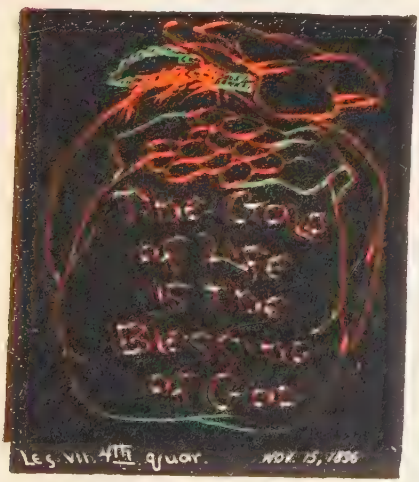
STAR OF BETHLEHEM.


God Honors
Those Who
Serve Him
Les. III. 4th quar.
Oct. 18, 1896


Close The Door
of Your
Do!
Heart
With a Firm Denial
Les. IV. 4th quar.
Oct. 25, 1896

God will
Build
Upright
Les. V. 4th quar.
NOV. 1, 1896


We are the
Temple of the
Living
God
Les. VI. 4th quar.
NOV. 8, 1896


The Gold
of Life
is the
Blessing
of God
Les. VII. 4th quar.
NOV. 15, 1896

Les. VIII. 4th quar.
NOV. 22, 1896

Hints for Blackboard Talks.

LESSON IV.—FOURTH QUARTER.

Keep a snappy NO always on hand. There are times when you want to say No, and say it in such a way, with such emphasis, that it will mean No, and nothing else. There are some kinds of sin that are dangerous to even dally with. There is the doubt of God. Let it get into the heart, and it is very difficult to dislodge it. Be ready at all times to be loyal to God, and to firmly resist the tendency to sin. It is the boast of some men that they can lead others astray. They take delight in serving the evil one. For these a firm denial is the only way. Dally with them, and they will lead the soul into pleasant, temporizing ways.

LESSON VI.—FOURTH QUARTER.

One of the most sublimely beautiful thoughts in the Bible is that which says, "Ye are the temples of the living God." Far more beautiful than the most beautiful cathedral is this casket of the soul, and it is indeed a fit place for the spirit of God to dwell. But for a human being to be worthy of such honor is almost beyond conception. Yet we have the assurance of God that he will dwell in us and with us if we are worthy of such a great honor. It is worth sacrifice and trial to fit us to become the temples of the living God. Dedicated to the service of God, we have reached the highest point of human attainment.

LESSON VIII.—FOURTH QUARTER.

An eminent theologian who has given the greater part of his life to the study of the Word of God said: "Love and obedience are the two great themes in the Bible." Everything in it can be gathered under one of these heads. Without argument, there stands the fact that to enjoy the blessing of God we must obey God, and the man who desires to reach a high position, morally or mentally, in the world must go to the Word of God for the highest and holiest form of living, and must obey the injunctions he finds there. Hope, happiness, heaven, all these lie in the pathway of the obedient servant of God.

LESSON III.—FOURTH QUARTER.

An aged man who had worked all his life for the one purpose of gathering money, said: "I have no honors that I would not exchange for the peaceful possession of a hope of eternal rest. I have not been happy here, and I fear that I will not be happy hereafter." Had this man served God all the years of his life, he would have had no doubts in his mind about the here or the hereafter. God honors those who serve him. He pays the best of wages at all times. The history of human life proves that God gives a special blessing to those who love and serve him, and he gives it to them while they are on the earth to enjoy it.

LESSON V.—FOURTH QUARTER.

Solomon was honored in that he was called to do a great work for God. To him was entrusted the building of the temple. It has been called Solomon's temple. It was God's temple, and the honor that was given to Solomon was in the fact that he was serving God. There is temple building going on all around us, and need of more than is at present in sight. If we expect to be of value to God in his work, we must ask him to help us build up right lives. He will do it. He has told us in the Bible how he can do it, and if we try he will help.

LESSON VII.—FOURTH QUARTER.

Gold alone can not give happiness. The possession of much gold is dangerous to true happiness. God's richest treasures can not be purchased for gold, or can not be exchanged for gold. The real pleasures, the enduring pleasures are those that God put into a life that is given up to service and to helpfulness. There is very little real pleasure that is not the result of companionship, and there is very little congenial and satisfactory companionship that is not in some way associated with God. Selfishness is the rule of life for those who do not serve God, and where there is great selfishness there can be little happiness.

PRACTICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

I. FOLLOWING THE STAR.—1. *A Heavenly Guide.*—

Far in the east, in the sweet olden story,
Shone through the earth night a heavenly star;
Drawn by the mystical power of its glory,
Knelt at a cradle the wise from afar,
Knelt at a cradle in reverence bending,
Bringing their gifts, the most royal and rare,
Bearing the honors of ages unending
To the Child of the Ages, the kingly and fair.

2. *The Wise Followers.*—Note the faith of the magi; faith leading to the action; faith shown by perseverance; faith overcoming obstacles; faith humbly accepting God's plan; faith following God's direction (*Hurlbut*). "We should look up to heaven to be guided rightly on earth." Cross a snow covered field, watching your footsteps carefully to see that you make a straight path, then look back and see how crooked it is but; fix your eyes on some higher object, and the path will be true.

3. *The Expectation of a Messiah.*—We are informed by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Josephus that there prevailed throughout the entire east, at this time, an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that ere long a powerful monarch would arise in Judæa and gain dominion over the world (*Farrar*). Zoroaster is said to have been a disciple of Jeremiah, from whom he learned about the Messiah and the prophecies. He taught the Persians concerning Christ. He declared that in the latter days a pure virgin should conceive, and that as soon as the child was born a star would appear blazing even at noonday with undiminished luster. "You, my sons," exclaimed the venerable seer, "will perceive its rising before any other nation. As soon as you see the star, follow it wherever it leads you, and adore the mysterious child, offering your gifts to him with the profoundest humility. He is the Almighty Word which created the heavens" (*Memoir of Mrs. Judith S. Grant, missionary in Persia*).

4. *Written by the Prophet.*—The Hindoos expect the tenth and final incarnation of Vishnu at the town of Muttra. This is to be perpetual, and the hopes and interests of the people are more and more centering around this place. May the day soon come when they shall know that the great incarnation of deity has become a fact in Bethlehem of Judæa.

Still at the far golden gate of the morning
Waiteth a Monarch his kingdom to win;
Knocking and waiting, they heed not the warning,
Nor open the portal to usher him in.
Hear not and heed not—alas, they are dreaming
Dark dreams of horror that shut out the light,
Where the ray of His star on the closed gates are gleaming,
Dreaming and dying alone in the night.

5. *Search Diligently.*—An artist suspected the existence of a portrait of Dante by Giotto, and after careful research thought that he had located it in a room used to store wood and hay. He obtained permission to search the place, and began with the utmost care to remove the whitewash, until he was rewarded by the appearance of the portrait on the wall. How much further should we journey, how much more carefully seek to look upon the face of the Christ, and to reveal him to others.

6. *The Star Went Before Them.*—They were wise men because they were seekers of truth. It cost them something to follow that star. Explorers have to be brave men; they are generally considered fanatics, but where should we be to-day without our explorers? There is help for us in following this star; not a sun, but a star; not following much light, but being true to the light we have. It will bring us sometimes to the very feet of the Christ. Be true to the starlight, and it will bring you to the light of the sun (*Margaret Bottome*).

II. FINDING THE KING.—1. *They Rejoiced.*—Aristotle, in one of his works, fancies the feelings of one who, having lived in darkness all his life, should for the first time

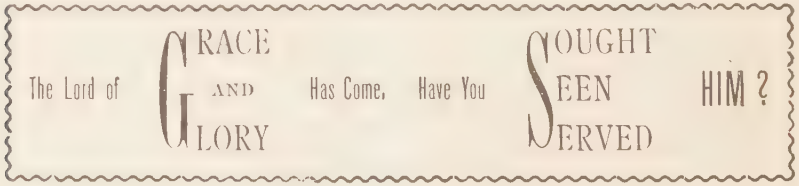
behold the rising sun. He might have some idea of the world from the light of candles, or of the stars, but when the sun rose what new glories would burst on his vision. The dangers, too, would be shown in clearer light, as well as the safe roads. So Christ was the day-spring from on high (*Peloubet*). Procopius says that near the pole, where the night lasts many months, the natives climb the mountains dressed in their best garments to welcome its return. Each strives to get the first sight, and when it appears they embrace each other with joy, crying, "Behold the sun." A religion without joy is a landscape without sun. Christianity has given to the world more poems, hymns, melodies, and manifold utterances of joy than any other influence which has touched the nature of man. It is not an accident that in the practice of music harmony was unknown until Christianity became dominant. The world of sin has its entrancing melodies, but they are fitful and sporadic. The gladness of a Christian heart accords with the great nature of God (*Joseph Parker*).

2. *Worshiping the Lord of All.*—It is related that Christoferus, a giant, was determined to serve only the mightiest. He served a king until he found that he feared an emperor, then he found that the emperor was afraid of Satan, but when he saw that Satan trembled before the cross, he served Christ evermore as the strongest (*Legend of Christoferus*). They did not worship empty-handed. If we may not overlay spiritual life neither may we denude it. The true law of life is that its energies be developed in all the forces, and with all the beauty of which they are capable, and that it worship with such cultured adornment as in the highest degree may appeal to and express its own spiritual emotions (*Allon*).

3. *Gifts.*—Next to the things of necessity, the rule for a gift, which one of my friends prescribed, is that we might convey to some person that which properly belongs to his character, and was easily associated with him in thought. But our tokens of compliment and love are for the most part barbarous. Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem; the shepherd, his lamb; the farmer, corn, and the miner, a gem; the sailor, coral and shells; the painter, his picture; the girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing. . . . I fear to breathe any treason against the majesty of love, which is the genius and god of gifts, and to whom we must not affect to prescribe. . . . For the rest, I like to see that we can not be bought and sold. I find that I am not much to you; you do not need me; you do not feel me; then am I thrust out of doors, though you proffer me houses and lands. No services are of any value, but only likeness (*Emerson*).

4. *Christmas at Bethlehem.*—Pilgrims are arriving in Bethlehem by thousands in advance of Christmas week, and we are among the number. Our first inquiry is for the Grotto of the Nativity. The Grotto is reached by a stone staircase, of thirteen steps, leading down from the church. It is a natural cave, and the church having been built directly over it, shuts out the light of day. There is good evidence of the genuineness of the claim that here our Lord was born. The exact spot is said to be the arched recess directly before us. The first thought with the devout visitor is invariably a regret that the natural walls of rock appear only in two or three parts of the cave, and especially that the shrine of shrines is overlaid with colored marble, and further adorned with gold and silver—a display that absolutely vulgarizes it. A silver star let into the marble floor of the semi-circle niche is kept bright by the tears and kisses of the pilgrims (*Marion Harland*).

5. *A Silent Departure.*—We are not bidden now to keep silent. The story is complete and waiting to be told. And as the shining of the star came to us from the east, is it not a debt that we owe to bear the good tidings back to the regions from which it came?



Hints for Blackboard Talks.

Lesson IX.—Fourth Quarter.

We can not conceive of the glories of the hereafter. It is not natural that we should. The queen of Sheba could not understand the wonders of the work of Solomon. She had nothing to compare it with. It seems hard here to follow the cross, to experience the human side of Christianity. Jesus is both King and Lord, and we shall have a part in the kingship as we have had in the pilgrimage. Our sonship will be worth more to us in the hereafter, when we realize all of its glory.

Thanksgiving Lesson.

It is getting to be the custom to associate the creature comforts with the word Thanksgiving, and more especially the day set apart as the one day of thankfulness. This is a wrong idea. It is too narrow. The spiritual blessings are those for which we should be most thankful.

God put it into the heart of the true lover of God to see joy and beauty in a thousand ways that are not apparent to the one who has no love of God. For all that God has given us, and the hope of the greater gift to be, let us be thankful.

Lesson XI.—Fourth Quarter.

There is a hackneyed saying, "The good die young." It is not true in the sense that it is usually used. The facts as set forth in the best statistics go to prove that among men the good live longest, have the best health, and get most of the wealth. They show that the use of liquor shortens life and makes that life unhappy and miserable. Yet year after year the rum demon seizes his part of the young men and women and sends them to an early grave. God warned men about liquor, and the warning has been repeated many times since, and yet there are those who will not hear.

Lesson X.—Fourth Quarter.

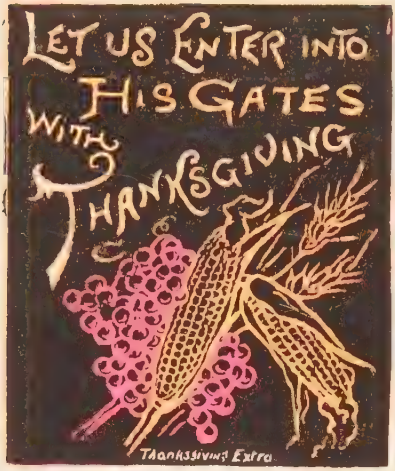
The oak sometimes breaks where the reed but sways. It is not well to be self-sufficient. God helping me is a safe, strong sentiment. I will. It is well to be manly and strong. To be determined and plucky, but it is safe to depend on the strength of God rather than our own in times of temptation. The tempter does not come to us in the way we expect. It is a new temptation, one that has charms that we have not seen in others, and like many who have gone before, we fall.

Lesson XIII.—Fourth Quarter.

With the ending of the year comes the thought that the ending of life is a certainty. It may be many years away, it may be very near, but in any case the mind is turned to the question. When life shall end, what then? If the life here has been lived in obedience to Christ, if it has been lived as God has directed, that it should be lived, there need be no fear of the hereafter. God has made that all right. He has given his commandments and has shown us the way of life. If we choose the way of darkness it is our own fault.

Lesson XII.—Fourth Quarter.

Unless we could blot out all that is Christian in the world we can not realize what it would mean to the earth to have no Christ. Or rather what it means to the world to have a Christ. The glad tidings that were wafted to the world by the voices of the angels on that first glad Christmas morn have been given to millions since to make them happier. It was the great Gift to the world, making happiness possible through the ages that would not have been had it not been for the coming of the Christ. He makes the world glad.


LET US ENTER INTO
HIS GATES
WITH
THANKSGIVING
Thanksgiving Extra

JESUS
IS
BOTH
KING
AND
LORD
Les. IX. 4th. quar.
Nov. 29, 1896

TRUST
TO
GODS
POWER
TO SAVE
Les. X. 4th. quar.
Dec. 6, 1896

WINE AND
STRONG DRINK
LEAD
WILLIAM
DIED
AGE 21
Les. XI. 4th. quar.
Dec. 13, 1896

GLAD TIDINGS
GREAT JOY
Les. XII. 4th quar.
Dec. 20, 1896

WHERE
LIFE SHALL END
WHAT
THEN?
LIGHT
OR DARKNESS?
Les. XIII. 4th. quar.
Dec 29, 1896

GOLDEN TEXT.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.
—Eccl. xii. 13.

LESSON XIII. DECEMBER 27.

REVIEW.

The lessons of the quarter cover the reign of Solomon, a period of forty years.

THE GLORY OF SOLOMON NOT TO BE COVETED.—Ye children of poverty and toil, ye sons and daughters of affliction, who, in your humble homes, or on beds of sickness and suffering, or amid your shattered hopes and loves, are envious of the prosperity of others, read well this history. You may yet learn that the poor are often the richest, the humble are often the greatest, and the suffering are often the happiest of mortals. Even Solomon in all his glory may be more to be pitied than these (*Errett*).

(Ecclesiastes xii. 1-7.)

1 Remember now (also) thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while (or ever) the evil days come, not, nor (and) the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

2 While (Or ever) the sun, or (and) the light, or (and) the moon, or (and) the stars, be not darkened, nor (and) the clouds return after the rain:

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, (street;) when the sound of the grinding is low, and he (one) shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick (music) shall be brought low;

5 Also (Yea,) when they shall be afraid of *that which is* high, and fears (terrors) *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, (blossom,) and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire (the caperberry) shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

7 Then shall (And) the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Do not mourn the years that vanish, there are ever more remaining;
Do not mourn the scenes behind you, there are fairer in the future.

HELPFUL READINGS.

Monday, Dec. 21.—A Wisdom that Brought Grief (Eccl. i. 1-18).
Tuesday, Dec. 22.—A Disappointed Fatalist (Eccl. vi. 1-12).
Wednesday, Dec. 23.—Wisdom from Experience (Eccl. vii. 1-14).
Thursday, Dec. 24.—Present Inequity, and Deferred Justice, Perplex the Wise Man (Eccl. ix. 1-18).
Friday, Dec. 25.—The Story of Christ's Birth (Luke ii. 1-14).
Saturday, Dec. 26.—Blessings of True Friendship (Prov. xxvii. 1-12).
Sunday, Dec. 27.—Remember Thy Creator (Eccl. xii. 1-11).

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

I. S. A. K.—What alarming message did Bathsheba and Nathan bring to King David? How did David meet the emergency? About how long after this did David live? And what can you say of his character?

II. S.'s W. C.—About how old was Solomon when he came to the throne? Why did he go to Gibeon? What did God say to Solomon? What did the young king ask for? How did God regard the petition?

III. S.'s W. and W.—What is said of the peacefulness of Solomon's reign? In what ways did he show his wisdom? What is said of his fame?

IV. P. of S.—What is a proverb? What does the proverbist say is the beginning of knowledge? What should be done when sinners entice you? How does gain affect the man who gets it by greed and injustice?

V. B. the T.—What important king was said to be a lover of David? What did Solomon desire of him? What arrangements were made between these kings?

VI. The T. D.—How many years were occupied in building the temple? What was brought to the temple from the old tabernacle? What from the tabernacle that David had built? What part did Solomon take in the dedication of the temple? Why did he wish God ever to maintain the cause of Israel?

VII. G.'s B. upon S.—When did the Lord appear to Solomon a second time? What did he promise if the king would strictly keep his commandments? If he, or his children, did not, what would be the effect on Israel? What on the temple?

VIII. R. of O.—What tends to secure to a person long and peaceful life? What is the effect of being genuinely kind and true? What should we do with our "substance" or property? What is pain and suffering usually a sign of?

IX. The F. of S.—From what region did a famed queen come to see Solomon? Why did she come? How was she affected by what she saw and heard?

X. S.'s S.—What causes led to the downfall of Solomon? Does he seem ever to have wholly forsaken the worship of Jehovah? What fatal sin was he guilty of? What judgment was pronounced upon him? Why was his reign as a whole a failure? What do you know of his last days?

XI. C. against I.—Why have we a reason for not envying sinners? What is said with reference to wine-bibbers? How does a man come to be a drunkard? Who will never be a drunkard? What is the effect of strong drink upon a man? What is its effect upon a city, or a nation? What is the duty of every right-minded person with respect to the drink habit, and the drink traffic?

XII. The B. of C.—Where was Jesus born? Why was he born? Who sought him to worship? What led them? Who sought him to slay? What led him to do this? Did the wise men find Jesus? Did the king? Who can always find Jesus?

COLLECT.

Grant us, O God, the wisdom that comes from perfect faith in thee. For all things may we wait thy time; and may we see in every change that thou in love art bearing us to better things. May our hearts cease clinging to the past; but reading thy great purposes, may we turn our tear-marked faces to the future, and go forth with thee. We crave thy mercy, for it tells thy love, and blesses us. Heal all the sorrows that our sins have brought. For ourselves we only pray, give us pure hearts; hearts wholly ready for thy use in earth or heaven. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

HELPFUL LITERATURE.

Among helpful books in the study of these lessons there may be mentioned the "Pulpit Commentary," "Preacher's Homiletic Commentary," "Cambridge Bible" for Schools, and such older works as that of Henry; Geikie's "Hours with the Bible," Stanley's "Lectures on the Jewish Church," Edersheim's "Israel Under Samuel, Saul, and David," W. M. Taylor's "David King of Israel," Deane's "David," and Farrar's *Solomon* in "Men of the Bible Series," Errett's "Evenings with the Bible," Phelps' "Studies in Old Testament History," Edersheim's "The Temple and Its Service" Trench's "Lessons in Proverbs," Dean's "Outline of Bible History" (the best of hand-books), Josephus; Milman's "History of the Jews," and *History of the Jews* in "Story of the Nations Series," are especially valuable for later Jewish history.

CLASS RECORD.

Class No. ..... Teacher.

NUMBER.	NAME.	January.				February.				March.				
		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	1	8	15	22	29

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CLASS RECORD.

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CLASS RECORD.

Class No. . . . . Teacher.

NUMBER.	NAME.	July.				August.					September.			
		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27

CLASS RECORD.

Class No...... .....*Teacher.*

NUMBER.	NAME.	October.				November.					December.			
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